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ABSTRACT

The document, one in a series of seven reports from the Value of Children Project, discusses results of the survey in Thailand. The project conducted interviews with 360 married couples in the vicinity of Bangkok. The volume is presented in seven chapters. Chapters I and II discuss the conceptual model, research methodology, and sample characteristics. Chapter III details responses concerning positive and negative values of children including reasons for wanting daughters and sons, reasons for wanting a specified number of children, and general attitudes toward children. Chapter IV presents perceptions of economic costs and benefits of children. Chapter V focuses on family size and family planning including attitudes toward contraception and abortion, family planning knowledge and practices, and the relationship of family size and planning to participant background. Chapter VI describes the value of children and fertility within the social context. The final chapter summarizes findings and makes recommendations for population policy. Responses concerning the advantages of children centered around companionship, economic and general help (especially in old age), and continuity of the family name. Disadvantages included financial costs, concern over the child's health, and the responsibilities of parenthood. Policy recommendations include government insurance or pension plans to reduce parents' dependency on children in old age; a collective approach to social activities to reduce the need for many children; and educational efforts to change family size norms by emphasizing the economic and emotional advantages of a small family. (Author/KC)

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the value of children

a cross-national study

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thailand

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preface

This report presents findings on how Thai parents value children, and how the values associated with children relate to attitudes and practices concerning family building. The findings are based on interviews with 360 married couples in the vicinity of Bangkok, conducted in January 1973. The survey was part of a cross-cultural, collaborative project, called the Value of Children (VOC) Study, the first phase of which was carried out with comparable samples in six countries—the Republic of China (Taiwan), Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United States (Hawaii).

Planning for the VOC project began in April 1972, at a workshop sponsored by the East-West Population Institute in Honolulu. Because little was known about the subject under investigation, the present project was designed as an exploratory study. A more definitive study, based on a national sample of the Thai population, is now in progress.

The exploratory phase served to test questionnaire items and analytic methods, and to provide experience in this new research area. The six coinvestigators developed a common questionnaire, common sampling method, and common data analysis for the first phase. James T. Fawcett, formerly of the East-West Population Institute and the University of Hawaii, currently senior representative for East and Southeast Asia, the Population Council, Singapore, coordinated this phase of the project. This country report for Thailand is the fourth in a planned seven-volume series describing results of the pilot survey. Volume 1, *Introduction and Comparative Analysis* (Arnold et al., 1975)

describes the project as a whole, presents results in comparative form, and includes basic documents used in the study.

The Institute of Population Studies of Chulalongkorn University was the executing agency for the Thai portion of the project. Visid Prachuabmoh, director of the Institute, contributed his valuable experience to the research. Much of the work on this project was done in cooperation with the other coinvestigators—Rodolfo Bulatao of the Philippines, Sung Jin Lee of Korea, Toshio Iritani of Japan, Tsong-Shien Wu of Taiwan, and Fred Arnold and James Fawcett of Hawaii.

In preparing the Thai report, the authors received valuable assistance from Sandra Ward, publications officer of the East-West Population Institute; Sonia Albores, research assistant at the Institute; James Fawcett; Fred Arnold, who recently served as demographic expert at the National Statistical Office of Thailand; and Keith Lansdell, volunteer from Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO). Lois Bender of the East-West Population Institute produced the typeset volume.

Finally, the Value of Children Study was made possible by the support of the International Development Research Centre in Canada, for which we are deeply grateful.

1

introduction

Children are generally viewed as functional for parents or for sociocultural systems, but until recently not much empirical research had been done to discover why people want children. To explore the many values people associate with children, a group of social scientists from six countries organized in 1972 a collaborative, cross-cultural investigation of individual and cultural determinants of childbearing behavior. Known as the Value of Children (VOC) Study, this project was designed to explore fertility-related motives in a variety of cultural settings and among different socioeconomic groups. The present volume reports in detail the results of the VOC survey in Thailand. (Portions of the introductory material in this volume are adapted from earlier reports of the VOC project. For a description of the study as a whole, see Arnold et al., 1975.)

The objectives of the VOC Study in Thailand were: (1) to investigate comprehensively for the first time the social, psychological, and economic benefits and costs associated with having children; (2) to outline the range of benefits and costs that parents in Thailand attach to children and to investigate the relative salience and importance of those benefits and costs; and (3) to explore the relationship of perceived benefits and costs of children to the socio-demographic background, family planning attitudes and practice, and family size of the interviewed parents.

The research was designed to increase our understanding of both the values parents associate with children and how those values are re-

flected in fertility behavior. This focus was stimulated in part by the practical problem of rapid population growth in Thailand. In 1970 the population was 36.4 million, according to an estimate prepared by the National Statistical Office (Arnold and Phananiramai, 1975) and was growing at about 3 percent per year (Thailand, National Economic and Social Development Board et al., 1974). By 1975 the population had increased to about 42 million.

The Thai government is aware of the economic and social problems posed by rapid population growth and is taking steps to slow the rate of growth. In 1970 it adopted a policy of reducing the annual rate of natural increase from 3 percent to 2.5 percent by 1976. The Five-Year Economic Development Plan for 1972–1976 places major emphasis on population and family planning, and the Ministry of Public Health has assigned highest priority to family planning, along with maternal and child health (Nortman, 1974).

Research on the problem of population growth in Thailand generally falls into the categories of socio-demographic studies and knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) studies, which of course have direct application to population programs. For a review of the literature, see Fawcett et al. (1973). Because research focusing specifically on the value of children to parents has been lacking, the results of this study, though tentative, should increase our understanding of childbearing motivations among Thai couples and suggest ways of dealing with the problem of rapid population growth.

Thus the study has sought answers to practical as well as theoretical questions. It should be emphasized, however, the this phase of the Value of Children research was exploratory and its findings are not conclusive. Nevertheless, it was designed to provide a broad baseline of knowledge upon which more definitive studies can be built in the future.

The conceptual model

The conceptual framework for the VOC Study focuses on the perceived satisfactions or benefits and the perceived costs of children. Both satisfactions and costs are interpreted broadly, to include psychological, social, and economic dimensions. The fundamental assumption underlying the study is that these dimensions are an essential component of motivations for childbearing and that they interact with cultural and environmental constraints and facilitators to influence family-size preferences and fertility.

The title of the study reflects the viewpoint that children are

"valued" according to the satisfactions that they provide to parents, which are weighed against the costs entailed in childbearing. No assumptions are made, however, about the relative importance of emotional, social, or economic benefits and costs; likewise, it is not assumed that a conscious weighing of benefits, costs, and alternatives occurs in all circumstances.

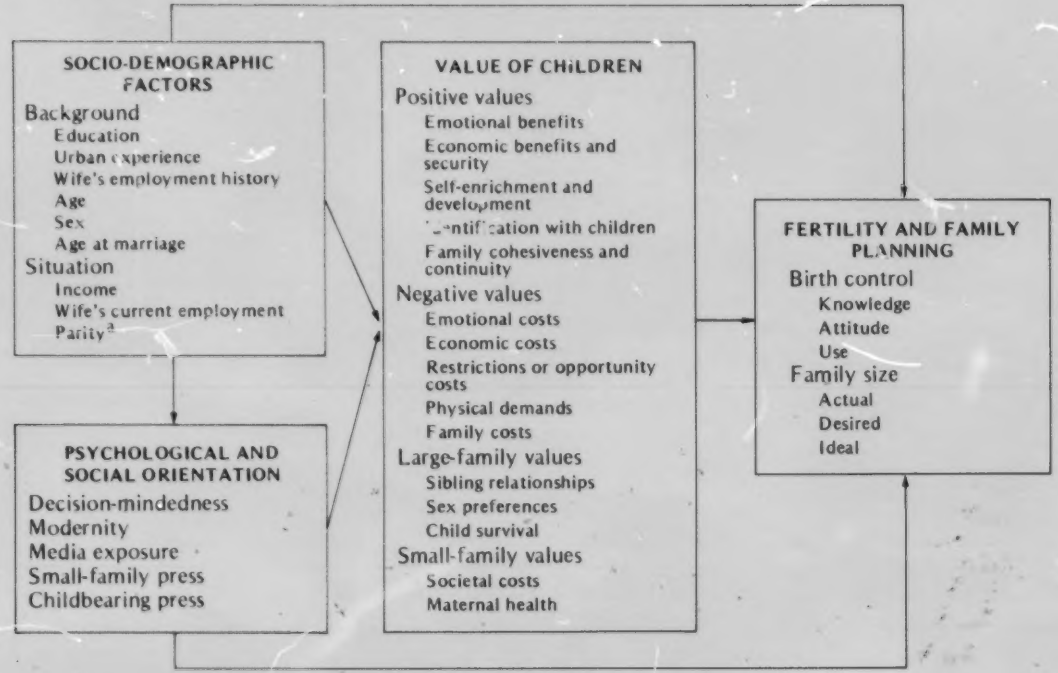
The survey questionnaire assesses beliefs about a variety of functions served by children, reflecting a general utilitarian perspective. In psychological terms, a means-end paradigm is implied, whereby children are viewed as the means to achievement of certain ends valued by the parents. Those ends can reflect fatalistic as well as "rational" value orientations, however, and children may be viewed by some persons as a uniquely valued end in themselves. In such cases, a decision-making framework that assumes all couples weigh alternatives would not be appropriate. One aim of this project is to determine which people, under what circumstances, give genuine consideration to alternatives to childbearing.

Another way this study assesses value-of-children dimensions is to distinguish between reasons for having children and reasons for wanting children. Parents *have* children for a variety of reasons that are not closely linked to personal motivations—such reasons as the strength of societal norms about number of children, fatalistic or naturalistic orientations toward childbearing, and ignorance about methods to prevent or interrupt pregnancy. Parents also *want* children for reasons that are intimately related to personal happiness and well-being—such as the giving and receiving of love, the fulfillment of a marital relationship, the validation of adult status, the sense of achievement connected with childbearing, and the provision of economic and emotional security in old age. In this study, both types of reasons are assessed and their relative strength in connection with number of children wanted is investigated. It is hoped that this approach will produce new insights about the determinants of desired family size, which is of course the critical long-term issue for population growth.

The costs of children are also conceptualized along several dimensions, including practical burdens, financial costs, and socio-psychological costs—for example, physical and emotional strains on the parents and restrictions on their personal freedom. To the extent that such costs are salient to parents, they should interact with perceived satisfactions to affect desired and achieved family size, when cultural and environmental restraints are taken into account.

The perceived satisfactions and costs of children are hypothesized

Figure 1.1 Conceptual model for the Value of Children Study



a Parity may be considered a situational variable or a family-size variable, but not both at the same time.

to be related to four other clusters of characteristics of respondents: socio-demographic characteristics, psychological and social orientation, family planning knowledge and practice, and family size. The relationships are best viewed in the context depicted in Figure 1.1. In this model, the value-of-children variables are assumed to intervene between socio-demographic factors (including background and situational variables) and socio-psychological orientations on one hand, and family planning variables and family-size variables on the other. The socio-demographic factors, in combination with an individual's general social and psychological orientation, are viewed as antecedents of the value-of-children dimensions. (For a description of the 15 value-of-children dimensions shown in Figure 1.1, see Arnold et al., 1975.)

The conceptual model highlights anticipated relationships among the four clusters of variables. The investigation will relate parents' feelings about children to their background and their psychological and social orientation on one hand, and to their fertility and family planning behavior on the other. Major determinants of family size and family planning decisions will be explored as well.

Structure of the report

Chapter 2 describes the research methodology, sample selection, questionnaire, field personnel and fieldwork, and data processing. It also presents a profile of the respondents. Chapters 3 and 4 describe the child values and disvalues elicited from respondents during the survey interviews. Chapter 5 presents respondents' family-size preferences and their knowledge, attitudes, and practices concerning birth control. The relationship of family-size and family planning variables to background variables is also explored by means of simple correlational analysis. In Chapter 6 regression analyses are used for prediction of fertility-related variables, using the background variables and the value-of-children variables as predictors. Chapter 7 summarizes the VOC findings in Thailand and presents some tentative policy recommendations.

2

methodology and sample characteristics

Sample selection

The Thai sample consisted of 180 couples, or 360 husbands and wives. Of this total, 60 couples were drawn from the urban middle class, 60 from the urban lower class, and 60 from a rural area. Couples from the urban middle class were selected from the residential village of Klongchan, a suburban area of Bangkapi District, near Bangkok, about 25 kilometers southeast of the Don-Muang International Airport. The urban lower-class respondents were from the residential area of Klongtan, about 10 kilometers south of the village of Klongchan; and the rural group was chosen from the village of Bangkhuad in Tambon Klongkoom, about five kilometers northwest of Klongchan. All three sites are located within the district of Bangkapi, Province of Phranakorn, which includes the capital city of Bangkok.

The sites were chosen both for their socioeconomic diversity, the main aim being to locate subsamples representing three distinct social classes, and for their linguistic and ethnic similarity. Other sites satisfied the first condition but differed ethnically and thus were not selected. All prospective sites were visited by the investigators and research assistants. It should be noted that in this exploratory phase of the research, the main focus was on comparing the values attached to children by the three socioeconomic subgroups. An equal number of respondents from each subgroup was thus sought, there being no intention of drawing a sample representative of the whole country.

The middle-class village of Klongchan was constructed by the Department of Public Welfare in 1969 for rent or purchase by people whose monthly income exceeds 3,500 baht (US$175). The two-story houses are made of concrete and contain three bedrooms; each lot is approximately 320 meters square. The water supply and sanitary services are of a good standard. Each unit is valued at about 250,000 baht (US$12,500).

The lower-class area of Klongtan is situated near a slum in Tambon Klongtan, Bangkapi District. Houses in this area are mostly small, constructed of wood, and one story high. Some of the houses are separate units but others have been built as connected units, each occupied by one household. Most of these units are rented by the occupants; very few residents own their homes. Sanitary services do not exist.

The village of Bangkhuad is located near Klongchan. Although Bangkhuad is in the vicinity of the capital city of Bangkok, the main occupation of the inhabitants is rice growing, as it is for most people in the rural areas of Thailand. In the 1950s it was selected for an anthropological study of rural life in Thai society (Kaufman, 1960). It was chosen for the VOC rural site because the socioeconomic conditions in this village are for the most part the same as those in upcountry rural areas of Thailand. The inhabitants of Bangkhuad grow only one rice crop a year, which keeps them fully employed for approximately six months. During the remainder of the year some people grow such crops as soybean and sugar cane, while others find wage-earning employment in construction projects in the Bangkok suburbs. Quite a few, however, are unemployed during this period.

Most of the houses in Bangkhuad are owned by the occupants, although many houses shelter extended families. Public water and sanitary services are not available, as in the Klongtan area, but the lower population density makes living conditions in Klongkoom better than in Klongtan.

Within each site, 60 couples were randomly selected from persons who met four sampling criteria: (1) married, (2) with at least one child, (3) living with spouse and spouse available for interview, and (4) husband between 20 and 44 years of age and wife between the ages of 20 and 34. At the prelisting stage, Klongchan had 186 eligible couples, Klongtan had 132, and Klongkoom 223. Prelisting was done by first obtaining for each selected area the list of registered residents (by household). Then the list was taken to the locality for verification and correction in consultation with the authority in charge of the area. From this corrected household list, the list of eligible couples was then

constructed. A random sample was drawn from this list. Any couple who refused to be interviewed was to be replaced by the next eligible couple on the list. During the interviewing stage there were ten refusals due to inconvenient scheduling, but no one refused after an appointment was made.

The questionnaire

Data for this survey were collected by interview with a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire, which had been developed and pretested in collaboration with coinvestigators from the five other countries in the project, consisted of 165 standardized, or core, questions that explored 26 topics. The core questionnaire appears as Appendix A in the first volume of this series (Arnold et al., 1975). Each investigator was free to add country-specific questions to the core questionnaire. Eleven Thailand-specific questions were added with the purpose of obtaining more information about topics considered to be culturally specific to the locale. These questions, which are listed in the Appendix to the present volume, mostly concern religion and family economic status.

The 26 major topics covered by the core questionnaire were:

1. Screening for eligibility
2. Number, ages, sexes, and birthdates of children (including adopted children)
3. Influences on children from home
4. Advantages and disadvantages of children
5. Number of children wanted
6. Reasons for not wanting fewer or more than the desired number
7. Ideal family size
8. Importance of having girls and boys
9. Hypothetical effect of increased income and free education on desired number of children
10. Husband-wife communication about number of children to have
11. Concept of small family and large family
12. Effect of family size on child's personality
13. Attitudes toward children (45 Likert-type items)
14. Birth control knowledge, attitude, and practice
15. Expected economic help from children
16. Economic burden of childrearing
17. Educational level of respondent
18. Educational aspiration for children
19. Background data on respondent: age, marriage, residence

20. Husband's and wife's influence on family decisions
21. Level of modernity
22. Religiosity and religious affiliation
23. Employment of husband, wife, and parents
24. Family income and perceived economic status
25. Effect of having children on feelings about children
26. Interviewer's notes

Some of the questions were structured in form; others were open-ended and coding schemes had to be developed for them after the interviews were completed.

One important feature of the core questionnaire is that it was developed in such a way as to facilitate cross-cultural comparison. The process of "back-translation" was employed to keep the Thai version of the questionnaire as close as possible to the English. In some cases culturally comparable concepts were substituted for direct translation, where the latter produced confusion.

After the questionnaire was translated into Thai, trial interviews were conducted with ten respondents of low education in order to determine the most appropriate format for certain questions. Afterward an actual pretest of the questionnaire was conducted under the supervision of the investigator and the research assistants by six graduate students of the National Institute of Development Administration. For this purpose five couples from each of the socioeconomic groups were selected.

Data collection

The collection of data was given special attention in this project. Although the number of respondents was limited to 360, the volume of data to be collected from each was large (more than 600 variables), and the subject of the interview was not necessarily enjoyable for the respondent to discuss. To maximize interview rapport, therefore, a special effort was made to gain the respondents' confidence.

At the rural site, the official headman of the village was asked to prepare a list of eligible couples. His involvement in the project increased its legitimacy in the eyes of the villagers. For the interview sessions, the respondents were invited to an interviewing center located at the local temple school, where the interviewers and the interview supervisor were waiting for them. Upon arrival at the center a respondent would be greeted by a member of the interviewing team. This person would familiarize the respondent with the interview procedure and answer his or her questions until the respondent was ready for the

interview session. The villagers usually were pleased to go to the center because they could visit with other villagers there. In the case of a few respondents who could not leave their houses, the interviewers visited them at home.

Because the urban respondents in Bangkok had often been accosted by interviewers of many kinds, including salesmen, they had to be approached with care. The research team obtained approval from the district officer before visiting a household. Interview appointments were made with the assistance of local school teachers, who were employed by the project.

Fourteen of the interviewers were graduate students at the National Institute of Development Administration in Bangkok. The other two interviewers were high school teachers well known in the interview sites; one of them had completed a master's degree in education; the other did not have a degree but had been teaching for more than ten years. The interviewers were all mature men and women.

Training of interviewers lasted four days. Two days were devoted to an overview and intensive drills on the questionnaire, one day to field practice on two cases, and the last day to a review of problems and corrections.

The project director and research assistants supervised the fieldwork. The same group of interviewers was used for the three sites, one site at a time. The interviewers took turns greeting the rural respondents as they arrived for their interviews at the interview site. In the middle-class and lower-class areas two interviewers met with a husband and wife separately at the same time if both were at home. If it was necessary to interview spouses at different times, the one who was interviewed first was asked not to discuss the interview until after the second interview had taken place. Interview sessions generally lasted for about one and a half hours.

Data processing

The interviewers and field supervisors did a preliminary check and editing of the completed questionnaires in the field, revisiting households to obtain missing information or clarification of responses. After the fieldwork was completed, the interviewers and some graduate students coded and checked the questionnaires. Code checking was done on the total sample. Data were then punched onto IBM cards at the National Institute of Development Administration and later mailed to the East-West Population Institute, which coordinated the data processing for all six countries. At the East-West Center, data files were set up in such

a way that they could be easily used as input to programs in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). An IBM 360/65 computer at the University of Hawaii was used to process the VOC data. The processed data were then returned to Thailand for analysis by the investigators.

Sample characteristics

The three subgroups chosen for the study were distinct from each other in most socioeconomic characteristics (Table 2.1). The decision to sample three different social classes proved valuable because the subsequent data analysis showed the three groups to have major differences in the values they placed on children.

For the total sample, mean age of respondents was 32 years. Husbands were about four years older than wives. The urban middle-class respondents were the oldest group (mean age, 34 years), followed by the rural group (32 years) and the urban lower group (29 years).

Educational attainment was considerably higher among the middle class (13.7 years of schooling) than among the other two socioeconomic groups. The urban lower class had only 6 years of schooling on the average, and the agricultural group only 4 years. For the total sample, husbands had slightly more years of schooling than wives.

Despite the large difference in educational attainment between the middle class and the two lower-class groups, the literacy rate was very high for all three subsamples. That 91 percent of the rural group said they were able to read newspapers can be explained only by the proximity of their village to Bangkok and the availability of reading materials such proximity affords. The same high level of literacy is not found among Thai farmers in outlying areas. Many of them revert to illiteracy soon after completing the compulsory four years of schooling.

The occupational pattern was clearly differentiable across subgroups. The urban middle class did professional, technical, managerial, office, and clerical work; none were farmers or laborers. The rural group consisted mostly of farmers and farm managers, operatives and service workers (most of them in activities that support agriculture), and farm laborers. The majority of the urban lower-class group were operatives and kindred workers, service personnel, and nonfarm laborers. Most of the wives in the sample stated that they were employed—which is consistent with an earlier finding of Goldstein et al. (1972). Only 19 percent of the wives considered themselves "not employed." Of these, 14 percent were housewives and the rest regarded themselves as jobless, retired, unemployed, or students.

Table 2.1 Characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Mean age	34.0	28.6	31.8	29.4	33.6	31.5
Mean number of years of schooling	13.7	5.6	4.2	7.1	8.5	7.8
Percentage literate	100.0	91.7	91.2	92.8	97.8	95.3
Occupational group (percentage of total[a])						
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	24.2	2.5	0.0	5.6	12.2	8.9
Managers, officials, and proprietors (except farm)	23.3	6.7	0.8	7.8	12.8	10.3
Sales workers (including owners of stands and peddlars)	3.3	5.0	8.3	7.8	3.3	5.6
Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers	0.8	0.0	3.3	0.0	2.8	1.4
Clerical and kindred workers	23.3	9.2	3.3	12.8	11.1	11.9
Operatives and kindred workers	6.7	34.2	10.8	10.0	24.4	17.2
Service workers (excluding private household workers)	10.8	13.3	10.0	10.0	12.8	11.4
Farmers and farm managers	0.0	0.8	35.8	11.1	13.3	12.2
Laborers (excluding farm laborers)	0.0	13.3	5.8	6.7	6.1	6.4
Farm laborers	0.0	0.0	7.5	4.4	0.6	2.5
Private household workers	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.6	0.0	0.3
Unclassified others	0.8	3.3	1.7	3.9	0.0	1.9
Not employed: jobless, retired, unemployed, students	1.7	0.8	5.8	5.0	0.6	2.8
Not employed: housewives	5.0	10.8	5.0	13.9	0.0	6.9
All groups	99.9	99.9	98.9	99.6	100.0	99.7
Average estimated family income (baht per year[b])	62,671	15,962	16,071	31,986	31,211	31,591
Percentage Buddhist	97.5	82.5	83.3	88.3	87.2	87.8
Mean duration of marriage (in years)	6.8	7.6	9.4	7.7	7.9	7.8
Mean number of living children	2.2	2.8	3.3	2.7	2.7	2.7

a Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

b One baht = US$0.05.

Family income, as expected, was highest among the urban middle class (62,671 baht or about US$3,133 per year on the average), compared with 15,962 baht for the urban lower class and 16,071 baht for the rural group. Averages computed from the estimates of family income provided by wives and those independently provided by husbands were surprisingly close (31,986 baht and 31,211 baht respectively).

Nearly 88 percent of the total sample were Buddhists, the remainder being mostly Muslims. The proportion of Buddhists was highest among the urban middle class (98 percent).

The average duration of marriage for the total sample was nearly eight years. Although middle-class respondents were somewhat older than the other two groups, they had been married the shortest length of time (7 years on the average, compared with 8 years and 9 years for the urban lower-class and rural samples respectively). The well-educated middle-class respondents had married on the average six years later than the other two subgroups. The average number of living children was highest for the rural group (3.3), lowest for the middle class (2.2). These differences are partly due to differences in duration of marriage.

Profiles of sample subgroups

The three socioeconomic subgroups shown in Table 2.1 will be compared throughout the rest of this report. It may be useful, therefore, to present a brief profile of each group.

Urban middle class. These respondents had moved into government-constructed houses in 1969 and subsequent years. Their annual family income averaged 62,671 baht (about US$3,100). They were typically well educated, having an average educational attainment of a little less than two years of college. Most of them also held white-collar jobs as professional and technical workers (24 percent); managers, officials, and proprietors (23 percent), and clerical and kindred workers (23 percent). Average age for this group at the time of the interviews was 34 years. Average duration of marriage was almost seven years, which means that they had married at age 27 on the average. In those seven years they had borne two children, on the average. Nearly all (98 percent) of the respondents in this group were Buddhist.

Urban lower class. Perhaps because some of the urban lower-class respondents had migrated from rural areas, this group was more similar

to the rural group than to the middle class in education, occupational patterns, income, and age at marriage. Although 92 percent claimed to be literate, lower-class respondents had completed on the average less than six years of schooling. The majority were operatives and kindred workers (34 percent), service workers not employed in households (13 percent), and nonfarm laborers (13 percent). Eleven percent of the women (compared with 5 percent of middle-class and rural women) were housewives holding or seeking no other job. Average estimated family income of this group was slightly lower than that of the rural group (15,962 baht, or US$770) and considerably lower than the middle-class estimate. The average respondent was nearly 29 years old at the time of the interviews, had been married for nearly eight years, and had three children. Age at marriage (21 years) was thus six years earlier on the average than among the middle class. Eighty-three percent of the lower-class group were Buddhist, the same percentage as among rural respondents.

Rural group. Rural respondents were typically born in the area where they were interviewed. Because their locality is only about one and a half hours by boat or minibus from Bangkok, some of them worked in the capital during slack periods for rice farming. With respect to income and education, therefore, they were better off than the Thai rural population in general. Their average educational attainment was slightly more than four years, but the large majority (91 percent) stated they were literate. Most were engaged in agriculture-related work, particularly rice farming. The average estimated family income for this group was 16,071 baht (US$780) per year. Average age of respondents at the time of the interviews was nearly 32 years and average duration of marriage was nearly nine and a half years, making mean age at marriage 22.4. Rural couples had between three and four (3.3) living children.

3

positive and negative values of children

Data pertaining to positive and negative values of children were obtained from responses to both open-ended and structured questions. Specific topics covered by open-ended questions were the advantages or benefits of having children compared with not having children, the disadvantages of having children, perceptions of why other people in the community want children, reasons for wanting daughters and sons, intensity of son preference, and reasons for wanting a specified number of children. Structured questions including a Likert-type attitude scale explored these values further, as well as others that were not necessarily revealed by the open-ended questions.

It should be emphasized that the values and attitudes described in this report are those reported by men and women who already had at least one child. Since a person's perceptions of children are likely to be influenced by the experience of parenthood, and even by the number of children one has, generalizations must be made with caution, for they may not hold for people without children.

Advantages of having children

Early in the interview respondents were asked the following open-ended question:

I would like to know what you think are some of the good things or advantages about having children, *compared with not having children at all.* These might include the pleasures and benefits you get from having children now and those that

you expect in the future. What would you say are some of the good things or advantages about having children, compared with not having children?

With nondirective encouragement by the interviewers, most respondents were able to cite two or three advantages. The mean number of responses was 2.7 for urban middle class, 2.1 for urban lower class, and 2.3 for the rural group. A 49-category coding scheme developed for all six VOC countries was used to code the advantages named. These categories are grouped under nine major headings, as shown in Exhibit 3.A. The 15 advantage categories mentioned most often by Thai respondents are presented in rank order in Table 3.1. Both emotional and utilitarian values were salient to the sample. The category "companionship, avoidance of loneliness," which received the greatest mention (by 25 percent of the total sample), is an emotional value falling under the major heading of happiness, love, and companionship. Mentioned with almost equal frequency, however, were "unspecified help in old age," an economic benefit, and "continuity of family name," an advantage that accrues to the kin group of the respondent. (Continuity of bloodline or kin group was included under the code category "continuity of family name.")

As expected, responses varied among the three socioeconomic subgroups, and in some cases the variation was quite large. Differences between men and women were much less pronounced. The urban middle class tended to emphasize the happiness that children bring to a family, their moral influence on the parents, the bond they create between spouses, and the perpetuation through children of the family name or bloodline. Of much less salience to this group were economic security or practical help from children, in contrast with the other two socioeconomic groups. For the urban lower class, help in old age was by far the most salient value, mentioned by half of the respondents. Household help and unspecified help received somewhat less frequent mention. But companionship, happiness for the family, and love and affection associated with children also figured prominently in their responses. Rural respondents emphasized the comfort and care children provide to their parents in old age and continuity of the family name. Mentioned somewhat less frequently were the help, comfort and care, and companionship provided by children in the household. Thus for the middle class, psychological and emotional benefits of children came to mind more readily than practical or economic advantages, whereas the lower-class and rural respondents tended to regard children primarily as economic and practical assets and as a means for continuity. But for all three groups children fulfilled emotional as well as utilitarian needs.

Exhibit 3.A Advantages of having children: major code categories and specific code categories derived from content analysis of responses

Happiness, love, companionship

Companionship, avoidance of loneliness
Love, affection
Play, fun with children; avoidance of boredom
Relief from strain, distraction from problems
Happiness for individual parent (general)
Happiness for family
Uniqueness, specialness in parent-child relationship

Personal development of parent

Character development, responsibility, maturity, morality
Incentives to succeed, striving to provide for children
Fulfillment of self, completeness as person
Extension of self
Learning from experience of childrearing
Motherhood, fatherhood; adulthood
Proof of fertility, masculinity, femininity

Childrearing satisfactions

Pride in children's accomplishments
Pleasure from growth, development of children
Children to carry out parent's hopes, aspirations
Opportunity to teach, guide, instill values
Satisfaction in one's childrearing ability, accomplishment
Satisfaction in providing for children

Economic benefits, security

Economic help in old age
Companionship, comfort, care in old age
Unspecified help in old age
Economic help (old age not mentioned)
Comfort, care (old age not mentioned)
Help in housework, family chores; practical help
Sharing financial responsibility; insurance, security
Help in family business, farm
Help in taking care of other children
Unspecified help (old age not mentioned)

Benefits to family unit

Children as bond between spouses
Children as reason for, fulfillment of marriage
Children as family life, complete or close-knit family

Exhibit 3.A *(continued)*

Kin group benefits

Continuity of family name
Continuity of family traditions
Enhancement of reputation of family
Having future grandchildren
Children as heirs, someone to inherit family wealth
Religious rituals, ancestor worship
To increase strength, power of kin group
To satisfy desires of spouse
To satisfy desires of other kin

Social, religious influences

Conformity to social norms
Conformity to religious norms
Children as benefits to society

General, intrinsic value of children

Children as treasure, wealth, assets
Instinctive, natural to have children
General wanting, liking children

Other advantages

Respondents were next asked to cite the most important and second most important advantages of children from among those they had just mentioned. For the sample as a whole, the most important advantages were help in old age, companionship and avoidance of loneliness, comfort and care in old age, and continuity of the family name or bloodline (Table 3.2). The importance respondents attached to advantages of children therefore closely parallel the salience (frequency of mention) of those advantages. But economic benefits, especially security in old age, weighed more heavily here for the urban lower-class and rural groups. For the middle-class group, on the other hand, emotional values far outweighed utilitarian benefits.

Another open-ended question about the advantages of having children took a semi-projective approach:

In your opinion, what are the main reasons why people around here want children?

Table 3.1 Most frequently mentioned advantages of having children
(Percentage of respondents who mentioned specified advantages, by subgroup)

Advantage	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Companionship, avoidance of loneliness	38	23	13	29	20	25
Unspecified help in old age	8	49	12	24	22	23
Continuity of family name	20	14	28	13	28	21
Companionship, comfort, care in old age	3	5	43	17	17	17
Unspecified help (old age not mentioned)	5	22	18	19	11	15
Happiness for family	19	10	6	10	13	12
Children as bond between spouses	28	6	2	11	12	12
Character development, responsibility, maturity, morality	23	3	1	5	13	9
Help in housework, family chores; practical help	0	17	10	12	6	9
Love, affection	8	9	6	7	8	8
Happiness for individual parent (general)	14	4	6	7	9	8
Incentives to succeed, striving to provide for children	20	3	2	7	9	8
Comfort, care (old age not mentioned)	3	9	13	7	10	8
Children as family life, complete or close-knit family	19	0	3	7	7	7
Economic help in old age	3	4	10	4	7	6

Forty percent of the respondents were unwilling to attribute motives to others. For those who did answer, the same 49 categories used to code answers to the previous questions were used here, plus several additional categories. The advantages, shown in Table 3.3, were similar to those named by respondents in reference to their own values, only

Table 3.2 Most important advantages of having children
(Percentage of respondents who ranked specified advantages first in importance, by subgroup)

Advantage	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Unspecified help in old age	3	32	6	16	12	14
Companionship, avoidance of loneliness	17	6	5	11	7	9
Companionship, comfort, care in old age	0	3	23	9	8	9
Continuity of family name	8	6	12	6	12	9
Unspecified help (old age not mentioned)	1	13	9	9	7	7
Happiness for family	9	5	3	5	6	6
Character development, responsibility, maturity, morality	9	2	1	2	6	4
Economic help in old age	0	4	9	3	6	4
Children as family life, complete or close-knit family	9	0	2	4	3	4
Love, affection	3	3	3	3	2	3
Happiness for individual parent (general)	3	1	4	3	2	3
Comfort, care (old age not mentioned)	0	5	3	2	3	3
Incentives to succeed, striving to provide for children	4	1	1	1	3	2
Help in housework, family chores; practical help	0	5	1	2	2	2
Enhancement of reputation of family	1	1	4	1	3	2

continuity of family name ranked highest in frequency of mention. Companionship was mentioned somewhat less frequently, as were various economic benefits of children.

Among those who did not know why others in their community wanted children, 26 percent and 30 percent were urban middle class

Table 3.3 Perceived reasons why people in the community want children

(Percentage of respondents who mentioned specified advantages among first four reasons, by subgroup)

Advantage	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Continuity of family name	21	18	38	19	32	26
Companionship, avoidance of loneliness	12	11	8	11	10	11
Companionship, comfort, care in old age	2	5	19	8	9	9
Unspecified help in old age	4	17	4	8	9	9
Help in housework, family chores; practical help	0	9	18	9	9	9
Unspecified help (old age not mentioned)	0	12	7	8	6	7
Happiness for family	13	4	0	4	7	6
Economic help (old age not mentioned)	1	4	13	6	6	6
Children as bond between spouses	10	5	3	6	6	6
Happiness for individual parent (general)	3	3	3	4	2	3
Conformity to social norms	6	3	0	5	1	3

NOTE: Forty percent of respondents were unable to cite any reason why others in the community wanted children.

and urban lower class respectively, and only 18 percent were rural. This finding suggests that rural respondents were more in touch with their community than were the two urban groups.

Disadvantages of having children

To ascertain the general disadvantages respondents associated with having children, an open-ended question was asked similar to that about advantages. After the respondents had mentioned all the disadvantages they could think of, they were asked to state which they considered to be most important and second most important. Disadvantages were coded according to the scheme used for all VOC samples

Exhibit 3.B Disadvantages of having children: major code categories and specific code categories derived from content analysis of responses

Financial costs
Educational costs
General financial costs

Emotional costs
Responsibility of parenthood
Discipline, moral behavior
Health problems of children
Concern over children's future success, happiness
Concern about satisfying children's present wants
Noise, disorder, nuisance
General rearing problems
General emotional strain

Physical demands on parents
Health hazard of pregnancy; maternal health
Physical work, tiredness caused by children

Restrictions on alternative activities
Restrictions on time
Restrictions on travel
Restrictions on social life, recreation
Restrictions on job, career
Restrictions on personal wants
Restrictions on privacy
General lack of flexibility, freedom

Marital problems
Less time, interaction between spouses
Disagreements over children
General marital problems

Kin group costs, problems of inheritance
Disadvantages relating to, affecting kin group

Societal costs, overpopulation
Disadvantages relating to, affecting society; concern about overpopulation

Other disadvantages

(Exhibit 3.B). Responses to the Thai sample are summarized in Tables 3.4 and 3.5.

By far the most salient disadvantage for the sample as a whole and for each subgroup was the general financial cost of children, mentioned by nearly half of all respondents. Other salient disadvantages were general rearing problems, the physical work and fatigue caused by children, and emotional strain. Mentioned less frequently were educational costs; problems of disciplining children; such opportunity costs as restrictions on career, flexibility and freedom, and travel; and the responsibilities of parenthood.

The financial costs of children were substantially more salient to the urban lower class, compared with either middle-class or rural respondents. Lower-class respondents reported about the same income as the rural and had slightly fewer children, but presumably they were faced

Table 3.4 Most frequently mentioned disadvantages of having children
(Percentage of respondents who mentioned specified disadvantages, by subgroup)

Disadvantage	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
General financial costs	39	61	42	40	54	47
General rearing problems	28	20	8	22	15	19
Physical work, tiredness caused by children	13	9	31	24	11	18
General emotional strain	18	14	8	15	12	13
Educational costs	6	8	18	8	13	11
Discipline, moral behavior	4	8	17	8	11	9
Restrictions on job, career	8	8	11	12	6	9
Health problems of children	6	6	7	7	6	6
General lack of flexibility, freedom	5	8	5	6	6	6
Restrictions on travel	4	4	8	7	4	5
Responsibility of parenthood	9	3	0	5	3	4
Noise, disorder, nuisance	3	1	4	3	2	3
Concern over children's future success, happiness	5	1	2	1	3	2
Health hazard of pregnancy; maternal health	3	0	3	2	1	2

Table 3.5 Most important disadvantages of having children
(Percentage of respondents who ranked specified disadvantages first in importance, by subgroup)

Disadvantage	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
General financial costs	24	43	30	23	41	32
General rearing problems	18	14	2	14	8	11
Physical work, tiredness caused by children	7	4	23	15	7	11
Discipline, moral behavior	3	3	11	7	5	6
General emotional strain	9	6	3	7	5	6
Educational costs	3	3	8	2	7	4
Restrictions on job, career	4	4	3	7	1	4
Health problems of children	3	2	2	3	1	2
Concern over children's future success, happiness	3	1	0	1	2	1
Noise, disorder, nuisance	2	1	2	2	1	1
General lack of flexibility, freedom	1	3	1	1	2	1

NOTE: Eleven percent of respondents did not rank the disadvantages in importance.

with a higher cost of living in the city. Thus, the relative cost of children was highest for the urban poor.

General rearing problems were mentioned mainly by the two urban groups, even though they had fewer children, on the average, than the rural respondents. This may be explained by the fact that city dwellers normally have nuclear families, and in some cases both the husband and wife work outside the home. Servants or housemaids can be hired, but such services have become expensive. Rural dwellers do not usually have to worry about childcare arrangements because normally there are elderly relatives in the household who can look after the children. That more women than men mentioned rearing problems is also understandable, since in Thailand women are customarily responsible for childrearing.

Physical work and tiredness caused by children, which ranked third in salience, was mentioned most often by rural women, who according to custom bear heavy responsibilities. On the farm as well as in the home there are certain jobs that are traditionally performed by women

only. Some husbands of course help their wives with these tasks, but few would want others to know about it. The woman's responsibilities in the home include shopping and cooking, caring for the children, caring for her husband and his relatives as though they were guests, and household cleaning and washing. On the farm she is responsible for planting rice, a job that takes long hours during the day while her feet and hands are in mud and her back is against the sun.

General emotional strain caused by children was mentioned mainly by the urban middle and urban lower classes, probably for the same reason that general rearing problems were salient to them. On the other hand, rural respondents mentioned educational costs more frequently than the urban respondents, perhaps because they felt these costs in two ways: not only did they have to pay school fees for their children, but they were also deprived of their children's labor on the farm during school hours.

Women were able to cite a few more disadvantages of having children than were men, probably because they bore the major responsibility for childrearing, whereas they were usually less verbal than men in response to other open-ended questions. On the subject of financial costs, however, men were more expressive than women, possibly because they considered it basically their responsibility to see that the family had enough money to function.

The most frequently mentioned disadvantages of children also tended to rank high in importance (Table 3.5). A third of all respondents considered general financial costs to be most important. Smaller percentages ranked general rearing problems, physical work and tiredness caused by children, general emotional strain, and problems of discipline and moral behavior as most important. Some differences were found among the subgroups in ranking the disadvantages. Nearly half of the urban lower-class group placed greatest importance on financial costs associated with childrearing, whereas only a fourth of the middle-class group and not quite a third of the rural group did so. General rearing problems were considered to be important by the two urban groups but not by the rural group, who, on the other hand, placed greater emphasis on problems of discipline and moral behavior. Men stressed financial costs of children, while women emphasized psychological and physical demands associated with childrearing.

The general agreement between salience and importance of the disadvantages elicited by means of the open-ended questions reinforces the outcome of the inquiry up to this point. It should be borne in mind, however, that the open-ended question is able to tap only some

of the values held by the respondent. Feelings or values regarded by the respondent as highly personal, socially unacceptable, or so obvious or "natural" as not to be worth mentioning are not likely to be verbalized in responses to such a question. An example of personal or unacceptable feelings might be the belief that having sexual relations without having children is shameful, or desiring children to strengthen the family against its enemies or to advance the family's social and political standing. Conversely, a respondent might not desire children out of fear of being unable to support them adequately, or fear that the children might bring disgrace on the family by becoming delinquents, criminals, or prostitutes. Unexpressed values taken for granted by respondents might not even be recognized by them because the values are embedded in the social milieu. Examples might be the belief that it is biologically natural for people to reproduce, that it is patriotic to have many children, or simply that a couple is expected by others to have children. Moreover, since the feelings are reported through language reflecting the respondent's own perceptual world, which may or may not be the same as that of others, the comparability of the data tends to be diminished. The comprehensive coding scheme used here should have helped minimize this loss effect, but there is no way to prevent it completely. In spite of these drawbacks of the open-ended question, we believe the responses generally reflect actual orientations of the Thai parents toward children.

The differences in value salience and importance observed between the socioeconomic groups can be attributed to differences in their social and economic circumstances. Urban middle-class respondents, with more education and income than the other two groups, had a comfortable living level and more choices concerning life goals, careers, and leisure activities. Because of their relative affluence, they were less likely than lower-class and rural respondents to regard children as a form of economic security and more likely to view them as competing with other, nonfamilial objectives. Marrying later than the other groups, they had had more time to experience nonfamilial roles. They had fewer children, on the average, when they were interviewed--possibly in part because of their greater access to birth control. Nevertheless, children fulfilled psychological and emotional needs of these parents, contributing to their personal happiness and the marriage bond. At the same time, middle-class respondents were sensitive to the emotional strain of rearing children.

Urban lower-class respondents, a number of whom had moved from rural villages to Bangkok in search of opportunity, had far fewer

choices than the middle class concerning their life goals. With little education, they found it difficult to earn a good living in the capital. Some of these rural migrants had probably begun their families before moving to the city, and the values they attached to children may have been those acquired in a rural setting. Although they probably realized that having more children in the city would not be economically advantageous, they hoped for some economic return on the children already born, in whom they had invested their money and labor.

The rural group was better off in some respects than the urban lower class. Although they were not well-to-do, the community in which they lived did not place emphasis on wealth. Since labor was needed on the farm, a large family was economically functional, and children provided emotional as well as economic and practical benefits to their parents. This traditional function of rural children may be weakening, however, as more children leave their parents' farms and seek work in the cities after completing their education. Awareness of the current trend may have been responsible for the emphasis many respondents placed on the cost of children's education and problems of discipline.

Differences between male and female respondents in the values they associated with children in general are minor compared with those between the socioeconomic groups. Where they exist, they appear to be related to differences in sex roles. Because according to custom a Thai woman is responsible for housework and childrearing, she has more contact with her children than does her husband. Being economically dependent on her husband, she looks to the children for security in old age should she find herself widowed or divorced. As head of the household, the husband is able to register the family wealth under his name and is thus economically more secure than his wife. He may expect to depend on his children to look after his estate when he becomes old, however, and he is concerned about continuing the family line that bears his name.

Thus far we have looked only at general values Thai respondents associated with children. Because children are valued differently in different contexts—for example, at various stages of the family-building process—and because they are themselves so diverse, the VOC Study sought to identify more specific aspects of the value of children to parents. In the following section, therefore, the analysis will deal with the reasons why respondents wanted sons and daughters, additional children, and a particular family size and composition.

Reasons for wanting a daughter and for wanting a son

As revealed by answers to open-ended questions, some respondents wanted to have more children because they wished the next child to be of a particular sex. Anticipating this aspect of fertility motivation, the VOC questionnaire asked respondents how important it was to them to have at least one girl or one boy among their children. Those who said it was very important or somewhat important were further asked why it was so.

Reasons for wanting a daughter

Two-thirds of the respondents said it was very important to have at least one girl among their children. Differences across the socioeconomic groups were not great, nor was there a substantial difference between husbands and wives.

The overwhelmingly most important reason for wanting girls among rural and urban lower-class respondents was that girls can help with

Table 3.6 Most frequently mentioned reasons why having a girl is important

(Percentage of respondents, by subgroup)

Reason	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Help in housework, family chores; practical help	15	79	82	57	61	59
Behavior or personality of girls	53	7	8	26	19	22
Companionship, closeness with mother	29	3	0	17	4	11
Companionship, comfort, care in old age	6	4	11	6	8	7
Comfort, care (old age not mentioned)	4	4	9	6	6	6
Unspecified help (old age not mentioned)	5	5	7	7	4	6
Help in taking care of other children	6	5	6	8	3	5
Parents' preferred sex ratio	8	2	1	1	5	3
Companionship, avoidance of loneliness	4	0	3	3	2	3
Other reasons	5	5	0	1	5	3

housework and family chores (Table 3.6). Thai middle-class parents are not so dependent on their children for practical help as others, and they usually want their daughters to do well in school, so the fact that they did not stress this reason is understandable. For the middle class, the important reasons for wanting a girl were the behavior or personal qualities of girls and companionship for the mother. These motivations were also mentioned slightly more often by women. Thus, rural and lower-class respondents valued female children mainly for household labor, while the urban middle-class group valued them more for emotional reasons.

Reasons for wanting a son

Respondents were asked how important it was for them to have a son and why. Eighty-three percent said that having a son was very important (16 percent more than for the same question about having a daughter). There was not much variation across socioeconomic groups nor between sexes, although somewhat fewer respondents from the urban lower class than from the middle-class and rural groups rated it very important to have a son.

By far the most frequently cited reason for wanting a son—mentioned by more than half of the Thai sample—was to continue the family name, bloodline, or kin group (all coded as continuity of family name). This reason was expressed most often by the urban middle class (70 percent) and somewhat less often by the urban lower-class and rural groups (51 percent and 55 percent). Slightly more men than women said it was the most important reason (Table 3.7). It is of some interest to compare this result with responses to the projective question concerning why other people in the community want to have children. The major difference between the two sets of answers is that when giving reasons for other people, rural respondents verbalized this motive more strongly than the other two groups, whereas when answering for themselves they verbalized it less strongly. Part of this difference may be due to the phraseology of the questions, the one referring to children in general and the other referring specifically to sons. But it is also possible that some rural respondents attributed to others in the community a motivation they shared but were reluctant to express.

Other important reasons for having a son, cited by much smaller percentages of respondents, were to conform to religious norms and for the performance of religious rituals and ancestor worship. These two reasons could be treated as one, thus making religion rather a strong reason for wanting a boy. In the Thai culture, a son plays a ma-

Table 3.7 Most frequently mentioned reasons why having a boy is important

(Percentage of respondents, by subgroup)

Reason	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Continuity of family name	70	51	55	57	63	59
Conformity to religious norms	1	12	24	13	11	12
Help in taking care of other children	18	7	6	11	10	10
Children as benefits to society	3	7	19	8	11	9
Economic help (old age not mentioned)	0	9	15	11	5	8
Help in housework, family chores; practical help	5	9	7	6	8	7
Religious rituals, ancestor worship	3	8	12	9	6	7
Behavior or personality of boys	12	7	2	5	8	7
Unspecified help (old age not mentioned)	3	4	8	5	5	5
Extension of self	6	5	0	2	5	4

jor role in religious observances intended to save the souls of his parents and other relatives. Some people believe that until a son enters the monkhood the souls of his dead parents will not be reborn. Not surprisingly, desiring a son for religious reasons was not considered important by the urban middle class, for the majority of Thai people born and educated in big cities no longer hold such beliefs.

Women placed slightly more emphasis on religious reasons for wanting sons than did the men. Perhaps the men were less traditional in their religious beliefs than the women, or they believed they could perform the necessary rituals themselves without having to depend on a son. Both explanations are probably valid.

It is of interest that the urban middle class, more than other groups, wanted boys to help in taking care of other children. This may be because there are fewer people in the household to help care for children, or because the social situation in Bangkok is dangerous for young chil-

dren and grown-up sons are wanted for protection. There was also a tendency for middle-class respondents to mention behavior or personality qualities of sons, while rural respondents gave substantial emphasis to economic and practical help. (See also the discussion of economic help in Chapter 4.)

Son preference

In an effort to measure intensity of son preference, a hypothetical question was asked: If the respondent did not have any sons, what would he or she do? The assumption was that the more children the respondent would continue to have until a boy was born, the stronger was his or her son preference. This assumption, however, may have been invalid for some rural respondents, who were not necessarily thinking of "stopping" at all. For them a large number of children may have indicated a preference for girls as well as for boys.

Among the total sample, 12 percent said they would stop trying to have a son after having two daughters, 28 percent said they would stop after having three, and 11 percent would stop after having four (Table 3.8). But the largest group (30 percent) said they would continue childbearing until a boy came.

Table 3.8 Intensity of son preference

(Percentage distribution of responses to hypothetical question "What would you do if you had no sons and kept having daughters?" by subgroup)

Response	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Stop after 1 girl	0	1	0	0	1	1
2	16	14	6	12	12	12
3	42	26	16	28	28	28
4	17	8	9	9	14	11
5	0	7	4	2	5	4
6	0	1	0	1	0	1
Would continue childbearing until son was born	11	33	47	34	27	30
Up to God or fate	7	7	14	10	8	9
Uncertain	6	4	4	5	5	5
All responses[a]	99	101	100	101	100	101

a Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Considerable variation exists across the subgroups. Son preference appears to have been strongest among rural respondents, who would have had more girls before stopping than the other two groups, and weakest among the middle class. It is noteworthy that the intensity of son preference was about equal for men and for women. This is probably attributable to the religious value of sons for Buddhists.

Other aspects of the data suggest that although most of the Thai respondents wanted to have children of both sexes, they attached more importance to having at least one boy than to having a girl. For instance, 60 percent of the respondents would have liked their first child to be a boy. In response to the open-ended questions concerning reasons for wanting boys and girls, respondents mentioned more reasons for wanting boys than for wanting girls. Table 3.9 provides additional support for the above findings on son preference, showing that the difference between ideal and actual number was consistently greater for sons than for daughters.

The existence of son preference in Thailand has also been shown in other research, particularly among men and ethnic Chinese (Knodel and Prachuabmoh, 1976). This research concludes, however, that son preference may be weaker in Thailand than in some other societies, that it appears to coexist with a relatively strong preference for daughters or a balance of the sexes, and that it may not have much influence on desired family size. Our research has shed some light on the motivations underlying son preference, but many questions remain. For example, "continuity of family name, bloodline, or kin group" was a more important motivation for urban than for rural respondents, perhaps reflecting the fact that the patrilineal name system was adopted in Thailand only within the last half century and is more widely used and more important among the modern segments of the society. For

Table 3.9 Actual number and ideal number of sons and daughters

Mean number	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Sons						
Actual	1.2	1.3	1.8	1.4	1.4	1.4
Ideal	1.7	1.7	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.7
Daughters						
Actual	0.9	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.3
Ideal	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.4

rural respondents, it would appear that economic motivations and traditional religious functions of sons are more significant. We have not fully explored the roles of sons and daughters in the Thai family and society, including such factors as inheritance practices, which could provide greater insight about preferences for sex of children. The results of our study and other research suggest that more thorough analysis of this issue would be worthwhile, since differential sex preferences do exist and apparently play some role in family-size decisions.

Reasons for wanting a specified number of children

As we have seen, couples value children not only in the abstract but also in relation to their own circumstances and needs. Boys and girls are valued differentially, and almost all VOC respondents wanted children of both sexes. To shed further light on the value of children and fertility motivations of the VOC samples, the survey sought to identify respondents' reasons for wanting families of a particular size. Accordingly, the questionnaire included two questions concerning respondents' reasons for wanting or not wanting another child in addition to those they already had, and their reasons for not wanting more or fewer than their desired number of children.

Reasons for wanting or not wanting another child

To assess motivations at the time of the interview, which would take into account the present circumstances of the family, respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of a list of reasons for wanting or not wanting another child. All respondents were asked to rate both the positive and the negative motivations, regardless of whether they were actually planning to have another child. The results, in the form of mean scores for each item, are shown in Table 3.10. The possible ratings were "very important" (scored 3), "somewhat important" (2), and "not important" (1). To interpret this table, it is useful to construct profiles, for each subgroup, of the scores above the midpoint of 2.0—that is, the more important items.

For the middle class, the more important reasons for wanting another child were all psychological in nature: the special feeling of love, the enjoyment of a small baby, the fun of having children around, and "to learn about life and myself." The lower class, in contrast, gave top rating to carrying on the family name and traditions, as well as to learning about life and self through children. Other important items for the lower class were to have help in old age, to have enough children survive to adulthood, the special feeling of love, fun from children,

Table 3.10 Mean scores on reasons for wanting and not wanting another child, and significance levels

Reason for wanting or not wanting	Mean score[a]						Significance levels by *t*-test			
	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents	Urban middle and urban lower	Urban lower and rural	Urban middle and rural	Female and male
WANTING										
Enjoy having a small baby	2.1	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	†	ns	ns	ns
To carry on family name, traditions	2.0	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	*	ns	*	ns
Want a boy/another boy	1.7	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.8	*	ns	ns	ns
Want a girl/another girl	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	ns	ns	ns	ns
Relatives feel I should have more children	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	ns	ns	ns	ns
To have a child to help me in my old age	1.5	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.0	2.0	*	ns	*	ns
My religious duty to have children	1.0	1.4	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.4	*	ns	*	ns
To have one more person to help the family economically	1.1	1.9	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.6	*	ns	*	ns
To make my marriage stronger	1.4	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7	*	ns	*	ns
To provide a companion for my child/children	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.8	ns	ns	ns	ns
Enjoy caring for, raising children	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	ns	ns	ns	ns
Spouse wants more children	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.6	ns	ns	ns	†

Fun to have children around the house	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.0	ns	ns	ns	ns
Raising children helps me to learn about life and myself	2.1	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	*	ns	†	ns
To have special feeling of love between parents and child	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	ns	ns	ns	ns
To share what I have and know with children	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.1	ns	†	*	ns
To have enough children survive to adulthood	2.0	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.2	*	ns	*	ns
NOT WANTING										
Would be financial burden to family	2.2	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.5	*	ns	*	ns
Spouse does not want more children	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.7	*	ns	*	ns
Would restrict my freedom to do other things I enjoy	1.6	2.0	2.2	2.1	1.7	1.9	*	ns	*	*
Would be a lot of work, bother for me	1.8	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.1	*	ns	*	ns
Could not spend as much time with spouse	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.4	*	ns	*	ns
Concern about overpopulation	1.6	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	ns	ns	*	ns
Would be emotional strain for me	1.7	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.8	1.9	*	ns	*	*

Table 3.10 *(continued)*

Reason for wanting or not wanting	Mean score[a]						Significance levels by *t*-test			
	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents	Urban middle and urban lower	Urban lower and rural	Urban middle and rural	Female and male
NOT WANTING *(continued)*										
Would not be able to give enough attention, care to other children	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.2	†	ns	*	ns
Would cause problems, strain between spouse and me	1.5	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7	*	ns	*	ns

ns—not significant.

† Significant at .05 level.

* Significant at .01 level.

a Possible scores range from 1 (not important) to 3 (very important).

and sharing. For the rural group, the utilitarian emphasis was stronger. The four most important items were carrying on the family name and traditions, help in old age, to have enough children survive to adulthood, and the special feeling of love. Also important for the rural group were learning about life and self and sharing.

Concerning negative motivations, all three social groups assigned greatest importance to the financial burden of another child, with the strongest rating given by the urban lower class. All three groups were also concerned about not being able to give enough care and attention to other children. In addition, the lower class and rural respondents considered the work and bother of childrearing an important reason for not having another child and, somewhat surprisingly, the rural respondents showed a strong concern about restrictions on their freedom.

There were no strong differences between men and women on the positive motivations for another child. (Only one comparison out of 17 is significant at the .05 level.) On the negative side, however, women assigned significantly greater importance to restrictions on freedom and the emotional strain connected with another child, with both differences significant at the .01 level.

In Table 3.11, scores on positive and negative motivations are compared for respondents who actually wanted another child and those who did not. As expected, those wanting another child scored higher on nearly all of the positive motivations, whereas those not wanting another child scored higher on all of the negative motivations. It is of interest to examine the specific items on which the greatest differences are observed, as they may indicate important factors in decisions about another child.

For positive motivations, the largest differences (.5 or more) are found on companionship for existing children, wanting a boy or a girl, spouse's desire for more children, and the fun of having children. For negative motivations, the largest differences (.4 or more) pertain to spouse not wanting more children, the work and bother of childrearing, the financial burden, and not being able to give enough care to other children.

This admittedly rough analysis reinforces the importance of sex preferences in family-size decisions, indicates a significant influence from the spouse, and reflects a concern for the child's environment involving both peer companionship and parental care. Economic and emotional motivations were also important in this decision-related context. Some of these factors, as well as others, will arise again in responses to open-ended questions on motivations concerning family size, to be discussed below.

Table 3.11 Mean scores on reasons for wanting and not wanting another child

(By those wanting more/not wanting more children)

Reason for wanting or not wanting	Respondents wanting more (N = 119)	Respondents not wanting more (N = 213)
WANTING		
Enjoy having a small baby	2.2**	1.8**
To carry on family name, traditions	2.5**	2.1**
Want a boy/another boy	2.2**	1.6**
Want a girl/another girl	2.1**	1.4**
Relatives feel I should have more children	1.4*	1.2*
To have a child to help me in my old age	2.2†	2.0†
My religious duty to have children	1.3†	1.5†
To have one more person to help the family economically	1.7	1.6
To make my marriage stronger	1.9*	1.7*
To provide a companion for my children	2.3**	1.6**
Enjoy caring for, raising children	2.0**	1.6**
Spouse wants more children	2.0**	1.4**
Fun to have children around the house	2.4**	1.9**
Raising children helps me to learn about life and myself	2.5**	2.2**
To have special feeling of love between parent and child	2.5**	2.2**
To share what I have and know with children	2.4**	2.0**
To have enough children survive to adulthood	2.4**	2.1**
Uncertain	(N = 25)	
NOT WANTING		
Would be a financial burden to family	2.2**	2.6**
Spouse does not want more	1.4**	1.9**
Would restrict my freedom to do other things I enjoy	1.8*	2.0*
Would be a lot of work, bother for me	1.8**	2.3**
Could not spend as much time with spouse	1.3†	1.4†
Concern about overpopulation	1.6*	1.8*
Would be emotional strain for me	1.7**	2.0**
Would not be able to give enough attention, care to other children	2.0**	2.4**

Table 3.11 *(continued)*

Reason for wanting or not wanting	Respondents wanting more (N = 119)	Respondents not wanting more (N = 213)
NOT WANTING *(continued)*		
Would cause problems, strains between spouse and me	1.6*	1.8*
Uncertain	(N = 25)	

NOTE: Possible scores range from 1 (not important) to 3 (very important).

† Differences between those wanting and those not wanting another child are significant at .05.

* Differences between those wanting and those not wanting another child are significant at .01.

** Differences between those wanting and those not wanting another child are significant at .001.

Reasons for not wanting fewer or more than desired number of children

Respondents were asked to state the number of children they wanted to have, taking into consideration their family circumstances. Each respondent was then asked why he or she did not want more than that number or fewer than that number.

Table 3.12 presents the reasons given by respondents for not wanting fewer than the desired number of children, based on a content analysis of responses to this open-ended question. Reasons mentioned most frequently by the total sample were that the respondent could afford or manage to raise that number, companionship for other children, the desire for more boys or girls, and anxiety over infant or child mortality.

Differences among groups were substantial. The middle class and men were especially prone to give the apparently "rational" answer that they could afford, or manage to raise, the number they desired. (This response can also be seen as a nonresponse or an evasion, since it may not indicate specific motivations.) The desire for companionship for children was stronger among middle-class respondents (who had fewer children). The desire for sons was more prevalent among the lower-class and rural groups, even though they already had several children, on the average. Rural respondents were the most concerned about infant mortality, and men seemed more concerned than women with economic benefits.

Table 3.12 Reasons for not wanting fewer than desired number of children
(Percentage of respondents who gave specified reasons, by subgroup)

Reason	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Can afford that number, able to raise that many	30	21	4	21	37	21
Companionship for other children	26	17	14	18	22	20
Want more girls	15	12	14	14	13	14
Want more boys	2	24	14	14	12	13
Anxiety over infant mortality	11	2	25	12	10	11
Unspecified help (old age not mentioned)	0	12	11	5	8	7
Other economic advantages	9	7	4	2	12	7
Companionship, comfort, care in old age	7	5	7	4	7	6
Good number to have, want to have that number	7	2	11	11	2	6
Companionship, avoidance of loneliness	4	2	11	9	2	5

The reasons that respondents gave for wanting no more than their desired number of children are shown in Table 3.13. Financial costs dominated the reasons for restricting family size in all groups, but especially so for the urban lower class. Educational costs were uniformly important, while rearing problems were salient only to urban respondents, particularly the middle class. The rural respondents frequently mentioned physical work and tiredness as a reason for limiting family size. No striking differences emerged between men and women, although men appeared to be slightly more concerned about the costs of educating children.

The data presented in this section provide insights into family-size decisions of the sample. (The subject of family-size preference and family planning will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5.) It appears that discussion between spouses concerning how many children they should have is not a common practice among Thai couples. Even among educated people of the urban middle class, communication be-

Table 3.13 Reasons for not wanting more than desired number of children

(Percentage of respondents who mentioned specified reasons, by subgroup)

Reason	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
General financial costs	40	83	52	59	58	59
Educational costs	28	23	26	21	28	26
General rearing problems	32	14	0	20	17	18
Physical work and tiredness caused by children	2	0	22	7	5	6
Health hazard of pregnancy; maternal health	11	0	4	7	3	5
Already have number of children wanted; enough boys, girls	9	0	7	4	7	5
Responsibility of parenthood	4	5	0	1	5	3
Concern over children's future success, happiness	2	0	7	0	5	3
General emotional strain	0	5	4	2	3	3
To have correct number of children for rearing; ease of handling, happiness	4	2	0	5	0	3

tween husbands and wives on this topic occurs less frequently than one might expect. Nearly a fourth (23 percent) of middle-class VOC respondents said they had not discussed with their spouse the number of children the spouse wanted, and among the lower-class and rural groups the proportion was higher (42 and 51 percent, respectively). This finding suggests that a sizeable portion of the Thai respondents (39 percent) either formulated their family-size plans without communicating those plans to their spouse, or did not plan at all. It is also noteworthy that when asked whether they wanted more children or not, 7 percent of the sample were unable to give an answer.

Attitudes toward children

A set of 45 Likert-type attitude items was presented to respondents in order to elicit responses that would shed light on aspects of the value of children that might not have been revealed by open-ended questions or other types of structured items. Each of the items was a sentence

stating an opinion about children or about having children. One of six responses was to be given: agree strongly, moderately, or slightly, or disagree strongly, moderately, or slightly. Scores ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with a nonresponse coded as 4 (neutral category).

Responses to the 45 attitude items were analyzed in several ways with the purpose of better understanding the values held by the respondents. Three analyses having useful results are reported in the present section. These are a comparison of items scoring in the top quartile and the bottom quartile for each subgroup, a factor analysis, and a comparison of scores on subscales made up by grouping some items.

Items scoring in the top and bottom quartiles

An average score was calculated for each item by subgroup. Items falling in the top and bottom quartiles of these sets of scores are shown in Table 3.14. In general, there is a similarity in ranking across the subgroups. No item falls in the top quartile for one group and in the bottom quartile for another. Most items scoring in the top or bottom quartile of one group score in the same quartile of other groups.

The items with which at least two socioeconomic groups strongly agreed were: (2) a good reason for having children is that they can help when parents are too old to work; (6) having children gives a person a special incentive to succeed in life; (14) having children makes a stronger bond between husband and wife; (16) a girl becomes a woman only after she is a mother; (25) one of the best things about having children is the true loyalty they show to their parents; (33) one of the best things about being a parent is the chance to teach children what they should and should not do; (34) a man has a duty to have children to continue the family name; (35) a person can feel that part of him lives on after death if he has children; (36) one of the best things about having children is that you are never lonely; and (40) the really important things in life can be learned only from the experience of raising children.

The items generally scored low by the socioeconomic groups were (1) caring for children is a tedious and boring job; (9) a couple ought to think seriously about the inconveniences caused by children before they have any; (10) always having children around is a great mental strain; (11) considering the pressures from family and friends, a person really doesn't have much choice about whether or not to have children; (19) children limit you in what you want to do and where

Table 3.14 VOC attitude items scoring in top and bottom quartiles

Item		Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male
TOP QUARTILE						
2	A good reason for having children is that they can help when parents are too old to work	na	6.5	6.7	na	na
4	It is only with a child that a person can feel completely free to express his love and affection	na	6.5	na	6.5	6.3
5	Most married couples would be happier if they did not have any children	6.6	na	na	na	na
6	Having children gives a person a special incentive to succeed in life	6.6	6.5	na	6.5	6.5
7	It is important to have children so that the family traditions will live on	na	na	6.6	na	na
14	Having children makes a stronger bond between husband and wife	6.8	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.7
15	One of the highest purposes of life is to have children	6.6	na	na	6.5	6.4
16	A girl becomes a woman only after she is a mother	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.5
25	One of the best things about having children is the true loyalty they show to their parents	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	6.6
30	A person who has been a good parent can feel completely satisfied with his achievements in life	na	na	na	6.5	na
33	One of the best things about being a parent is the chance to teach children what they should and should not do	na	6.5	6.6	6.6	6.3
34	A man has a duty to have children to continue the family name	na	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.5
35	A person can feel that part of him lives on after death if he has children	6.4	6.6	6.8	6.7	6.5
36	One of the best things about having children is that you are never lonely	6.8	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.6
37	Raising children is a heavy financial burden for most people	6.5	na	na	na	na

Table 3.14 *(continued)*

Item		Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male
TOP QUARTILE *(continued)*						
39	When you have children, you have to give up a lot of other things that you enjoy	6.4	na	na	na	na
40	The really important things in life can be learned only from the experience of raising children	6.5	6.7	na	6.6	6.5
45	A boy becomes a man only after he is a father	na	na	6.6	na	na
BOTTOM QUARTILE						
1	Caring for children is a tedious and boring job	3.4	4.1	4.5	4.1	3.9
5	Most married couples would be happier if they did not have any children	na	na	5.3	na	na
9	A couple ought to think seriously about the inconveniences caused by children before they have any	na	5.4	5.5	na	na
10	Always having children around is a great mental strain	3.6	4.5	5.0	4.6	4.1
11	Considering the pressures from family and friends, a person really doesn't have much choice about whether or not to have children	1.7	3.7	3.9	3.3	na
12	It is a person's duty to society to have children	3.9	na	na	5.2	5.2
17	It is the parents' fault if their children are not successful	na	na	na	5.3	na
19	Children limit you in what you want to do and where you want to go	na	5.1	5.3	na	5.1
21	A young couple is not fully accepted in the community until they have children	2.6	4.7	5.1	4.4	3.9
22	After becoming a parent, a person is less likely to behave immorally	4.3	na	na	na	na
26	Having children causes many disagreements and problems between husband and wife	3.9	4.3	4.6	4.6	3.9
27	A person with children is looked up to in the community more than a person without children	4.0	5.1	na	5.3	4.7

Table 3.14 *(continued)*

Item		Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male
BOTTOM QUARTILE *(continued)*						
32	Before having a child, a couple should consider whether they would rather use their money for something else	2.8	3.9	4.3	4.3	3.7
38	It isn't right for a couple to interfere with nature by deciding to limit the number of children they will have	2.5	4.3	4.6	4.6	3.8
41	Before having a child, a couple should consider whether it would interfere with the wife's work or not	na	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.7
42	Having children is a sign of blessing on a marriage	4.4	na	na	na	5.0

NOTE: Possible scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).
na—not applicable.

you want to go; (21) a young couple is not fully accepted in the community until they have children; (26) having children causes many disagreements and problems between husband and wife; (27) a person with children is looked up to in the community more than a person without children; (32) before having a child a couple should consider whether they would rather use their money for something else; (38) it isn't right for a couple to interfere with nature by deciding to limit the number of children they will have; and (41) before having a child a couple should consider whether it would interfere with the wife's work or not.

For items scoring in the bottom quartile, what departs from previous findings is that respondents tended to disavow some of the negative values they had expressed in response to the open-ended questions. Those disvalues included general rearing problems and emotional strain (similar to the items "caring for children is a tedious job" and "it is a great mental strain to have children around") and opportunity costs ("children limit you in what you want to do" and "a couple should consider whether having a child would interfere with the wife's work"). It should be noted, however, that many of the scores in the bottom quartile are still above the midpoint of the scale, thus indicating a lower intensity of agreement, rather than disagreement, with the items.

Factor analysis

To investigate the underlying pattern of relationships among the attitude items, the entire set of 45 attitude items was factor analyzed. A set of six factors was extracted from the Thai data for the total sample by principal component analysis and varimax orthogonal rotation (see Appendix Table). The first three factors explain 31 percent of the total variance and three-fourths of the variance explained by the first six factors (31.3/42.0). Hence interpretations of the remaining three factors must be made with caution. A summary of the items with high loadings on each factor in the varimax analysis is presented in Table 3.15 along with the mean score for each item by subgroup. The factors have been assigned the following titles:

Factor I. External influences on childbearing
Factor II. Financial costs and practical burden
Factor III. Achievement of maturity
Factor IV. Personal and societal benefits
Factor V. Power and influence to self and family
Factor VI. (Unnamed)

The best explanation for these factors is of course the set of items contained in each of them. Keeping in mind the risk involved in interpretation, however, it is useful to draw some general conclusions from the clusterings.

The first factor, external influences on childbearing, depicts a dimension of the value of children that is more than personal. It is a reflection of what respondents considered to be social norms on this subject, and of their tendency to comply with the norms. People are frequently aware of social norms regulating their behavior. On some matters, however, especially those like childbearing which are influenced by norms of an unknown origin, one is more inclined to adhere to the norm than when the norm is clearly understandable. Mean scores across subgroups indicate that rural respondents were most strongly oriented to external influences on childbearing whereas urban middle-class couples were the least. Between husbands and wives, husbands were slightly less influenced by external influences on childbearing.

The second factor, financial costs and practical burden, shows a clustering of economic costs, emotional costs, and opportunity costs. Rural respondents seemed to be most concerned about many of these costs. The differences between husbands and wives are small.

The third factor, achievement of maturity, combines the elements

of adult role development, parenthood, and happiness. Earlier analyses indicate that respondents were concerned about personal development and that they considered having children, especially the first and second child, as symbolizing this achievement. Mean scores on the attitude items suggest that wives gave more importance to this "maturity" value than did husbands. Across the socioeconomic subgroups average mean scores do not show meaningful differences in most cases, although middle-class scores tend to be a bit lower.

Factor four, personal and societal benefits, shows a clustering of values that accrue to both the individual and the group. Such benefits include expressing love, feeling needed, becoming a woman, being virtuous, fulfilling a duty, and obtaining help in old age. Among the subgroups, mean scores suggest that the urban middle class was not so concerned with these benefits as the urban lower class and the rural group. There was little difference between husbands and wives on this factor.

In factor five, power and influence to self and family, the clustered items do not seem coherent and the scores do not differ across socioeconomic or sex groups. Possibly the items reflect an underlying dimension of power and prestige connected with being a parent, but this must be regarded as a tentative interpretation.

Factor six is statistically the least reliable and in fact the first two items seem contradictory, while the third item seems unrelated to the other two. We will not attempt to interpret this factor.

Comparison of factor analysis with open-ended questions

The first five factors derived from the attitude scales constitute a second way of structuring the values of children, the first being the categories used to code responses to the open-ended questions posed at the beginning of the interviews (see Exhibits 3.A and 3.B). It is of interest to compare these two separately derived sets of values for similarities and differences.

The major and specific code categories were constructed to encompass the range of responses given to various open-ended questions. The questions concerned advantages and disadvantages of having children, reasons for wanting a boy or a girl, reasons for not wanting fewer or more than the desired number of children, and perceived reasons why people in the community want children. Labels used to identify the categories approximate the respondents' actual expressions. The labels may also be influenced by the researchers' views, although this was guarded against. Since there were questions about positive and negative values, two sets of code categories resulted.

Table 3.15 Factor scales and mean scores derived from VOC attitude items

Scale and item		Mean score: Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents	Factor loading
I. External influences on childbearing								
27	A person with children is looked up to in the community more than a person without children	4.0	5.1	5.7	5.3	4.7	5.0	.59
11	Considering the pressures from family and friends, a person really doesn't have much choice about whether or not to have children	1.7	3.7	3.9	3.3	2.8	3.1	.56
38	It isn't right for a couple to interfere with nature by deciding to limit the number of children they will have	2.5	4.3	4.6	3.8	3.8	3.8	.56
21	A young couple is not fully accepted in the community until they have children	2.6	4.7	5.1	4.4	3.9	4.1	.54
5	Most married couples would be happier if they did not have any children	6.6	5.8	5.3	5.9	5.9	5.9	−.47
7	It is important to have children so that the family traditions will live on	5.2	6.3	6.6	6.2	5.9	5.9	.41
II. Financial costs and practical burden								
9	A couple ought to think seriously about the inconveniences caused by children before they have any	5.7	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.6	5.4	.63
19	Children limit you in what you want to do and where you want to go	5.1	5.1	5.3	5.3	5.1	5.0	.62
41	Before having a child, a couple should consider whether it would interfere with the wife's work or not	4.5	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.7	.62

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10	Always having children around is a great mental strain	3.6	4.5	5.0	4.6	4.1	4.3	.61
26	Having children causes many disagreements and problems between husband and wife	3.9	4.3	4.6	4.6	3.9	4.2	−.60
37	Raising children is a heavy financial burden for most people	6.5	6.1	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	.57
1	Caring for children is a tedious and boring job	3.4	4.1	4.5	4.1	3.9	3.9	.53
32	Before having a child, a couple should consider whether they would rather use their money for something else	2.8	3.9	4.3	3.7	3.7	3.7	.48
III. Achievement of maturity								
44	A person who has no children can never really be happy	5.9	6.1	6.0	6.3	5.7	5.9	.65
20	Life for most people would be pretty dull without children	6.0	5.5	6.0	6.0	5.6	5.8	.55
29	Just the feeling a parent gets of being needed is enough to make having children worthwhile	5.9	6.1	6.1	6.2	5.8	6.0	.55
28	It is only natural that a woman should want children	6.2	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.0	6.1	.52
43	The family with children is the only place in the modern world where a person can feel comfortable and happy	5.9	6.2	6.3	6.3	6.0	6.0	.52
45	A boy becomes a man only after he is a father	5.7	6.3	6.6	6.4	6.0	6.1	.51
30	A person who has been a good parent can feel completely satisfied with his achievements in life	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.4	6.3	6.2	.50
IV. Personal and societal benefits								
16	A girl becomes a woman only after she is a mother	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.5	6.5	.64
3	Raising children is an act of virtue	5.3	6.2	6.4	6.1	5.9	5.9	.60

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Table 3.15 *(continued)*

Scale and item		Mean score: Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents	Factor loading
IV. Personal and societal benefits *(continued)*								
4	It is only with a child that a person can feel completely free to express his love and affection	6.2	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.3	6.4	.56
12	It is a person's duty to society to have children	3.9	5.8	6.0	5.2	5.2	5.2	.51
2	A good reason for having children is that they can help when parents are too old to work	5.0	6.5	6.7	6.1	6.0	6.1	.48
29	Just the feeling a parent gets of being needed is enough to make having children worthwhile	5.9	6.1	6.1	6.2	5.8	6.0	.43
7	It is important to have children so that the family traditions will live on	5.2	6.3	6.6	6.2	5.9	5.9	.42
V. Power and influence to self and family								
33	One of the best things about being a parent is the chance to teach children what they should and should not do	6.2	6.5	6.6	6.6	6.3	6.3	.65
6	Having children gives a person a special incentive to succeed in life	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.5	.62
14	Having children makes a stronger bond between husband and wife	6.8	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.7	6.6	.61
35	A person can feel that part of him lives on after death if he has children	6.4	6.6	6.8	6.7	6.5	6.6	.55
15	One of the highest purposes of life is to have children	6.6	6.2	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.3	.53
36	One of the best things about having children is that you are never lonely	6.8	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.5	.40

VI.								
23	The first thing a couple should think about when deciding to have children is whether or not they can afford it	4.5	6.2	6.2	5.7	5.5	5.6	.75
24	For most people, it is inevitable to have children	5.5	6.2	6.2	5.8	5.5	5.6	.75
22	After becoming a parent, a person is less likely to behave immorally	4.3	5.7	6.3	5.3	5.6	5.4	.74

NOTE: Possible scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

The factor analysis arranges structured attitude items into six groups, each containing items that respondents tended to score in the same way. Each factor may contain negative and positive statements about children. The factors are empirically formed and are not influenced by the respondents' choice of words or the researchers' views. Because the researchers selected the items to be included in the original scales, however, the set as a whole may not have given expression to the full range of attitudes held by respondents toward children.

Factor I (external influences) is similar to the general advantage category entitled social and religious influences, which few respondents mentioned. This is not a value that people are likely to express in response to an open-ended question, since it is subtle and not a socially desirable value. It appears to be an example of the ability of factor analysis to uncover an underlying dimension that might not have been discerned in other analyses or from unscaled data.

Factor II (costs and burden) is negative, and encompasses all the major disadvantage categories (Exhibit 3.B). Here the factor analysis does not give as detailed an insight into respondents' values as the open-ended questions do. Possibly the set of attitude items does not contain enough negative statements about children. A sign of consistency here is that the urban middle-class group in general tended to mention fewer disadvantages of children than the other groups and also scored lowest on factor II.

Factor III (maturity) seems close to the advantage heading of personal development of parent. We know from an earlier analysis (not discussed) that specific code categories under this heading were mentioned by a medium number of respondents. There is one point of inconsistency here, however. It was mostly urban middle-class respondents who mentioned personal development of the parent as an advantage of having children, but scores for the three socioeconomic groups on factor III are almost the same. The factor analysis may have revealed here a cluster of items reflecting a value that lower-class and rural respondents were less able or willing to express in response to open-ended questions. It may also be that personal development was not so salient to these respondents but was as important to them as to the urban middle-class group when the topic was called to their attention in a structured question.

Factor IV (personal and societal benefits) contains a broad range of positive values that appear to be related to the general advantage categories of happiness, love, companionship; kin group benefits; and social, religious influences. The urban middle class scored the lowest on

this factor; the other two groups scored equally high. This pattern is similar to that of factor II (costs and burden) discussed above.

Factor V (power and influence) seems close to the general advantage categories of personal development of parent, benefits to the family unit, kin group benefits, and social and religious influences. It may be noted, however, that the socioeconomic subgroups scored equally on factor V, whereas the advantage labeled personal development of parent was dominated by the urban middle class. This pattern is similar to that of factor III (maturity) discussed above.

From the above comparison, we see that there is a general correspondence between responses to the open-ended questions and the VOC factor structure. Nevertheless, the structure of the factors differs from that of coded advantages and disadvantages. For instance, the advantages labeled happiness, love, companionship; economic benefits, security; and kin group benefits are lumped together in factor IV, along with some specific advantages under the heading of benefits to family unit. Personal development of parent, on the other hand, coincides closely with achievement of maturity (factor III).

Two conclusions may be attempted here. First, the factors uncover some dimensions that are not expressed in the code headings and combine some dimensions that appear as separate headings. Thus it seems best to use both kinds of analysis in deciding on a set of dimensions to describe components of the value of children. Second, the factors differ from the code categories in the importance they give to different components of the value of children. Thus the data provide two different approaches to measurement of the value of children—a measure of salience (frequency of mention) that is supplemented by rankings of importance, and an attitudinal structure derived from ratings of agreement. If the relation between the values associated with children and actual fertility behavior is studied further, it will be necessary to ask which of these two approaches provided data more closely related to behavior.

Comparison of factor scales and subscales

Scores are presented below on two sets of scales composed in two ways: the factor scales corresponding to the result from the Thailand factor analysis, which has been discussed in the previous section; and the subscales used in all of the VOC country studies, which were derived mainly from a factor analysis of aggregated data from the six countries.

Table 3.16 Mean scores on VOC factor scales

Scale	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
I. External influences on childbearing	3.7	4.9	5.1	4.7	4.4	4.6
II. Financial costs and practical burden	4.4	4.7	4.9	4.8	4.6	4.7
III. Achievement of maturity	5.9	6.0	6.1	6.2	5.8	5.9
IV. Personal and societal benefits	5.3	6.2	6.3	6.0	5.8	5.9
V. Power and influence to self and family	6.5	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.5

NOTE: Possible scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

The factor scales. Table 3.16 summarizes mean scores on the five Thai factor scales discussed above, with separate scores for the six subsamples and the total sample. Differences in scores are small between men and women, but some large differences exist between the socioeconomic subgroups. The urban middle class scored distinctively lower than the other groups on external influences on childbearing and on personal and societal benefits. These appear to be attitudes that modernized, urban people tend to leave behind. (It should be noted, however, that the middle class scored high on certain "personal benefit" items, as shown in Table 3.15.) Two other scales—achievement of maturity, and power and influence to self and family—have very high average scores across the subsamples. Perhaps these two dimensions of the value of children are less affected by socioeconomic status.

The common subscales. The nine subscales that were developed from the data from all six country studies, mainly for use in comparative analysis, are identified in Exhibit 3.C. In Table 3.17 average scores for each subgroup of the Thai sample are given. Most of the subscales overlap in content with the Thai factor scales presented earlier. Subscales 6 (social status from children), 7 (external controls on childbearing), and 8 (costs of children), correspond to factors III (achievement of maturity), I (external influences on childbearing), and II (financial costs and practical burden), respectively. Moreover, the scores on each

Exhibit 3.C Content of the common subscales

1 Continuity, tradition, security

2 A good reason for having children is that they can help when parents are too old to work

7 It is important to have children so that the family traditions will live on

25 One of the best things about having children is the true loyalty they show to their parents

34 A man has a duty to have children to continue the family name

35 A person can feel that part of him lives on after death if he has children

2 Parenthood satisfactions

29 Just the feeling a parent gets of being needed is enough to make having children worthwhile

30 A person who has been a good parent can feel completely satisfied with his achievements in life

One of the best things about being a parent is the chance to teach children what they should and should not do

3 Role motivations

8 It is only natural that a man should want children

16 A girl becomes a woman only after she is a mother

22 After becoming a parent, a person is less likely to behave immorally

28 It is only natural that a woman should want children

45 A boy becomes a man only after he is a father

4 Happiness, affection

4 It is only with a child that a person can feel completely free to express his love and affection

43 The family with children is the only place in the modern world where a person can feel comfortable and happy

44 A person without children can never really be happy

5 Goals, incentives from children

6 Having children gives a person a special incentive to succeed in life

14 Having children makes a stronger bond between husband and wife

15 One of the highest purposes of life is to have children

6 Social status from children

21 A young couple is not fully accepted in the community until they have children

27 A person with children is looked up to in the community more than a person without children

Exhibit 3.C *(continued)*

7 External controls on childbearing

11 Considering the pressures from family and friends, a person really doesn't have much choice about whether or not to have children

38 It isn't right for a couple to interfere with nature by deciding to limit the number of children they will have

8 Costs of children

19 Children limit you in what you want to do and where you want to go

26 Having children causes many disagreements and problems between husband and wife

37 Raising children is a heavy financial burden for most people

39 When you have children, you have to give up a lot of other things that you enjoy

9 Decision-mindedness in childbearing

9 A couple ought to think seriously about the inconveniences caused by children before they have any

23 The first thing a couple should think about when deciding to have children is whether or not they can afford it

32 Before having a child, a couple should consider whether they would rather use their money for something else

41 Before having a child, a couple should consider whether it would interfere with the wife's work or not

of these pairs are comparable across the subsamples. Thus it is reasonable to postulate that at least three dimensions of the value of children derived from the Thai sample are a reflection of more general orientations toward children, since they are supported by data from the other countries participating in the study. Further investigation is of course necessary.

A *t*-test was used to measure the degree of confidence in differences between the scores of two given subsamples. Table 3.17 shows some differences between men and women and between the urban lower-class and rural subgroups. Between the urban middle class and the other two socioeconomic groups, however, there are strong differences. Thus in this analysis, as well as in the factor scales, values held by the urban middle class are in sharp contrast to those held by the poorer and more traditional respondent groups. Most of the differences

Table 3.17 Mean scores on common subscales and significance levels

Subscale[a]	Mean score					Significance levels by *t*-test			
	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	Urban middle and urban lower	Urban lower and rural	Urban middle and rural	Female and male
1 Continuity, tradition, security	5.9	6.6	6.7	6.5	6.3	*	†	*	†
2 Parenthood satisfactions	6.1	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.1	ns	ns	†	†
3 Role motivations	5.6	6.2	6.4	6.1	6.0	*	†	*	ns
4 Happiness, affection	6.0	6.2	6.2	6.4	6.0	ns	ns	ns	*
5 Goals, incentives from children	6.6	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.5	†	ns	ns	ns
6 Social status from children	3.3	4.9	5.4	4.9	4.3	*	†	*	*
7 External controls on childbearing	2.1	4.0	4.2	3.6	3.3	*	ns	*	ns
8 Costs of children	5.5	5.4	5.6	5.6	5.3	ns	ns	ns	†
9 Decision-mindedness in childbearing	4.4	5.1	5.2	4.9	4.9	*	ns	*	ns

ns—not significant.

† Significant at .05 level.

* Significant at .01 level.

a The items included in these subscales are shown in Exhibit 3.C.

are in the expected direction, in relation to other data in the study and as indicators of family-size motivations.

4

perceptions of economic costs and benefits of children

The previous chapter discussed advantages and costs of children, concentrating on socio-psychological aspects. This chapter is concerned specifically with the economic costs and benefits of children as perceived by parents. Such perceived economic benefits and costs are important for understanding fertility decisions within the family and may also be useful in the design of public policies to influence fertility decisions.

Economic costs of children

The analysis thus far has shown, in several ways, that for the Thai sample financial costs were a major negative value of children. The purpose of this section is to summarize the evidence previously presented and to introduce more data on the topic.

Table 4.1 presents respondents' perceptions of the economic costs of children, as measured by various items in the VOC questionnaire. The data reveal that a sizable majority of respondents were well aware of the financial burden of children to their parents. Nearly half of the sample (47 percent) spontaneously mentioned, in response to the open-ended question about the disadvantages of having children, that having children would present a financial problem for them, and 69 percent agreed strongly with the statement that raising children is a heavy financial burden for parents. Sixty-two percent of all respondents con-

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Table 4.1 Perceived economic costs of children

Measure	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Percentage who mentioned general financial cost as a disadvantage of having children	39	61	42	40	54	47
Percentage who strongly agreed that raising children is a heavy financial burden	77	65	65	69	69	69
Percentage for whom the financial burden of children was a very important reason for not wanting another child	42	77	67	62	61	62
Percentage who strongly agreed that a couple should consider whether they can afford it before having children	39	63	55	54	51	53
Percentage who mentioned educational cost as a disadvantage of having children	6	8	18	8	13	10
Percentage who thought that educating their children would be a very heavy financial burden	19	43	47	40	33	36

sidered the financial burden of children to be a very important reason for not wanting another child; more than half (53 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that before having children a couple should consider whether they can afford it. Educational costs, as a specific component of financial costs, were expected to impose a heavy burden for nearly half of the lower-class and rural respondents.

On several of these measures, a greater proportion of the urban lower-class group than of the other two socioeconomic subgroups expressed concern over the costs of children. Only in response to the statement that raising children is a heavy financial burden did the urban middle class express greater concern than the urban lower class; in general, the middle class showed less concern than the other two subgroups about the financial burden of children. Differences between men and women on these measures were minor.

Table 4.2 Perceived economic costs and desired family size

Measure	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Mean number of children that would be heavy financial burden to respondent	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.8
Mean score on perceived economic costs of total number of children wanted[a]	10.0	11.0	12.0	11.0	11.0	11.0
Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of economic burden their desired family size would entail						
No burden	23	21	11	17	20	18
Somewhat of a burden	34	32	32	31	35	33
Heavy burden	35	42	46	43	38	41
No response	8	5	11	9	7	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

a Possible scores range from 1 (no costs) to 15 (high costs).

Table 4.2 presents three indicators of the economic burden respondents associated with different numbers of children. For the total sample, the mean number of children that would constitute a heavy financial burden to the parents was 3.8. There was little difference between socioeconomic groups on this measure, although the trend toward greater felt burden for lower-class and rural respondents is shown both here and in the index that relates perceived burden of family size to the actual number of children wanted. The bottom section of Table 4.2 shows how much of a financial burden respondents were willing to accept in order to have the number of children they desired. For the total sample and for all subgroups, the largest number of respondents (35 to 46 percent) stated that the number of children they wanted represented a heavy burden. Slightly smaller numbers (31 to 35 percent) said it would be somewhat of a burden and only 11 to 23 percent said it would be no burden. The rural and lower-class groups saw their wanted family size to be more burdensome than did the middle class, a finding that is only partly attributable to their lower economic status. Both groups also wanted to have more children—an average of 3.7 and 3.3 respectively, compared with 3.0 wanted by the middle class.

Table 4.3 Effect of the perceived costs on wanted number of children

Measure	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Percentage who said they would be worse off with more children	85	69	68	74	74	74
Percentage who would want more children if their income doubled	23	34	40	32	33	32
Percentage who would want more children if education through college were free	21	39	36	36	29	32

Table 4.3 shows the results of three additional questions relating family size and economic considerations. Nearly three-fourths of all respondents said they would be worse off financially with more children; among the middle-class group the proportion was 85 percent, whereas it was somewhat lower for the other two groups. To assess the possible effects of a change in economic status and the availability of free education, respondents were asked two hypothetical questions: Would the number of children they wanted be affected by a doubling of their income or by a governmental decision to provide free education for all children, up to and including college? One-third of all respondents (32 percent) said they would want more children if their income doubled, the rural group being the most inclined to increase the number wanted and the middle-class group least so inclined. The same proportion of respondents (32 percent of the total sample) said the number of children they wanted would increase if the government provided free education. In this case the urban lower class was more influenced by the hypothetical policy change than the other two groups, the middle class being least affected.

The data presented above show clearly that most Thai respondents perceived the financial burden of having children to be high. The data also imply that if some of the economic constraints were lifted, respondents would want to have more children than they currently intended to have. In other words, these couples appear to have reduced the number of children they desired because of the heavy expense of raising them. It should be emphasized, however, that responses to the two hypothetical questions concerning doubling of income and the provision of free education may not be wholly reliable. It is difficult

to predict how a couple's childbearing behavior would actually be affected if the proposed measures were implemented.

Economic benefits of children

With regard to the economic benefits of children, the data reported earlier are not so conclusive. Urban middle-class respondents generally did not mention the economic benefits of children as an advantage of having children. The other two groups did mention economic benefits, but not to the exclusion of many psychological and social benefits that are derived from having children. This section will discuss additional findings on the perceived economic benefits of children, drawn from open-ended and structured questionnaire items.

Table 4.4 summarizes various measures of economic and utilitarian benefits attributed to children by Thai respondents. The first shows the percentage of respondents who mentioned any economic advantages of children in response to the open-ended question posed at the beginning of the interview. A striking difference is shown between the middle class (where only one out of five respondents spontaneously mentioned economic advantages) and the lower class and rural group (where four out of five mentioned economic benefits).

With respect to financial support for the parents in their old age, again the expectations of help from children are distinctively high for the lower-class and rural respondents. It is of interest too that throughout this series of questions women are shown to be more concerned about economic help than men.

Concerning reasons for wanting another child, Thai respondents attached moderate importance to help in old age and economic help to the family. As usual, rural and lower-class respondents considered these reasons to be more important than did the middle-class group. Finally, an index of expected economic help shows that the sample as a whole had a fairly high level of expectation, due mainly to the scores for the rural and lower-class respondents.

Asked whether they expected to receive economic or practical help from their sons, 68 percent of the total sample said that they did. This response was much more prevalent among the rural and urban lower-class groups (89 and 81 percent, respectively) than among the middle class (33 percent). Respondents were asked the same question about daughters, and the responses showed a level of expectation about the same as that for sons. The type of help expected from sons and daughters is shown in Tables 4.5 and 4.6. For sons, there is a greater emphasis on economic help, compared with an emphasis on help in house-

Table 4.4 Perceived economic benefits of children

Measure	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Percentage who mentioned economic benefits when asked about advantages of having children	20	80	76	63	55	59
Percentage who expected to rely a good deal or a little on their children for financial support in old age	25	83	90	73	59	66
Mean score on importance of having another child to help respondent in old age[a]	1.5	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.0	2.0
Mean score on importance of having another child to help the family economically[a]	1.2	1.9	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.7
Mean score on index of expected economic help from children[b]	7.3	13.5	14.4	12.2	13.2	12.7
Percentage who expected economic or practical help from sons	33	81	89	73	63	68
Percentage who expected economic or practical help from daughters	34	81	88	73	62	68

a Possible scores range from 1 (not important) to 3 (very important).

b Possible scores range from 1 (no expectation) to 17 (great expectation).

work for daughters. It should be noted, however, that both types of contribution are expected from both sexes.

The perceived economic benefits shown in Tables 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 are not necessarily an incentive for having children. They could be a rationalization for children already born or a form of compensation expected in return for what the parents have invested, financially and emotionally, in their children. As will be shown in the next chapter, there are significant positive correlations between economic benefits expected from children and both parity and wanted family size, but the correlation with ideal family size is not significant. It is probable

Table 4.5 Economic and practical help expected from sons
(Percentage of respondents expecting help, by subgroup)

Type of help expected	Urban middle (*N*=41)	Urban lower (*N*=95)	Rural (*N*=106)	Female (*N*=131)	Male (*N*=111)	All respondents (*N*=242)
Economic help (old age not mentioned)	24	38	36	40	29	35
Help in housework, family chores; practical help	41	31	36	32	38	35
Sharing financial responsibility; insurance, security	15	25	48	33	34	33
Companionship, comfort, care in old age	5	3	24	11	6	9
Unspecified help (old age not mentioned)	5	7	7	6	7	7
Help in family business or farm	17	1	4	5	5	5
Help in taking care of other children	10	4	3	5	4	5
Comfort, care (old age not mentioned)	10	6	2	10	3	5
Economic help in old age	2	5	4	3	5	4
Other, unspecified kinds of help	2	7	1	2	5	4
Unspecified help in old age	0	3	1	1	3	2

that at least some degree of economic incentive is operative as a fertility motivation, especially among the rural and lower-class groups.

Table 4.7 presents perceived changes in the economic utility of children over time. Sixty-three percent of the respondents thought that children nowadays are less willing to support their parents in old age, and an equal number thought that children are less willing to give part of their wages to their parents when the children start working. Other data not reported here show that an overwhelming majority of those who shared these views disapproved of the change in children's attitudes. Thus, most respondents perceived a negative change in the traditional economic functions of children.

This chapter completes the presentation of basic data on the values and costs of children as perceived by Thai respondents. Before we turn

Table 4.6 Economic and practical help expected from daughters
(Percentage of respondents expecting help, by subgroup)

Type of help expected	Urban middle (*N*=42)	Urban lower (*N*=96)	Rural (*N*=104)	Female (*N*=134)	Male (*N*=108)	All respondents (*N*=242)
Help in housework, family chores; practical help	64	83	83	79	81	80
Sharing financial responsibility; insurance, security	5	7	23	13	14	14
Companionship, comfort, care in old age	12	6	13	10	11	11
Economic help (old age not mentioned)	7	13	5	12	4	8
Comfort, care (old age not mentioned)	14	4	8	11	3	7
Help in taking care of other children	2	2	5	5	2	4
Help in family business or farm	10	0	3	2	4	3
Unspecified help (old age not mentioned)	0	0	4	1	2	2
Other, unspecified kinds of help	7	2	0	3	1	2
Unspecified help in old age	0	5	1	3	2	2
Economic help in old age	0	1	0	0	1	1

to an analysis of the relationship between these values and fertility behavior of respondents, a few comments about the values explored by the VOC Study are in order. Values (positive and negative) may be conscious and unconscious. Among different groups of people, these values differ in content, intensity, and the degree to which they affect fertility behavior. The present study did not attempt to probe unconscious values attached to children, nor did it fully explore certain conscious values that appear to be salient in the Thai context. Future studies might focus on childbearing motivations that emerged as important from the present research, such as the religious functions of children in a Buddhist society, actual (as contrasted with perceived) economic costs and benefits of children to their parents, children as a medium for personal growth and development, and the desire for descendants. All these values are related to life goals.

Table 4.7 Perceived changes in the economic utility of children over time

(Percentage of respondents who had specified perception, by subgroup)

Perception	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Children nowadays are more willing:						
to support their parents in old age	4	12	13	11	8	10
to give part of their wages to their parents when they start working	4	9	15	13	7	9
Children nowadays are just as willing:						
to support their parents in old age	8	12	23	15	12	14
to give part of their wages to their parents when they start working	8	13	21	18	11	14
Children nowadays are less willing:						
to support their parents in old age	64	69	56	59	67	63
to give part of their wages to their parents when they start working	64	70	55	58	68	63

A difficult question to answer is whether adults formulate their life goals and then decide to have children in order to attain some of those goals, or whether they bear children for other reasons (such as custom) and afterward rationalize their decision. Related to this issue is whether it is possible to maintain life goals and a sense of personal fulfillment without having children, or whether there are some satisfactions that only children can provide.

5

family size and family planning

This chapter summarizes VOC data pertaining to family size and family planning and relates those data to selected social and economic indicators. With this information as background, the chapter that follows deals with the interrelationships of socioeconomic factors, the value of children, family size, and family planning.

Family size and child spacing

Data from selected measures of family-size preference and birth intervals are presented in Table 5.1. As one might expect, the number of living children was highest among the rural group (3.3 on the average), somewhat lower among the urban lower class (2.8), and lowest among the urban middle class (2.2). The total number of children wanted was also highest among rural respondents (3.7), lower among the urban lower class (3.3), and lowest among the middle-class group (3.0). Wives wanted 0.3 more children than did husbands on the average. For the whole sample, the mean ideal number of children was smaller than the number of children actually wanted (3.1 compared with 3.3). This difference may be the result of some respondents' already having more children than they considered to be ideal. Differences between socioeconomic groups in ideal number of children were the same as those on wanted family size, but there was no difference between husbands and wives on ideal family size.

The respondents came from families of six children on the average,

Table 5.1 Selected measures of family-size preference

Measure	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Mean number of living children	2.2	2.8	3.3	2.8	2.8	2.8
Mean number of children wanted[a]	3.0	3.4	3.8	3.4	3.1	3.3
Mean number of children ideal[b]	2.9	3.1	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.1
Mean number of children in family of orientation	5.8	5.6	6.6	5.9	6.0	6.0
Estimated mean number of children in typical family in community	3.2	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.7	3.6
Mean number of children in "small" family	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.8
Mean number of children in "large" family	5.1	6.0	6.0	5.7	5.8	5.8

a Number of living children plus number of additional children wanted.

b Number of children respondents would want to have if they were starting their families again.

whereas they wanted to have about three children of their own—a decrease of about half. If the respondents' family-size goals (that is, the total number of children wanted) are not exceeded, the average completed family will be substantially smaller than the average family of orientation. Major changes in family-size goals were apparent among all the subgroups.

To explore respondents' perceptions of the family-size norm in their community, the VOC questionnaire included a question concerning how many children they thought the typical couple in their community had by the time the couple stopped bearing children. The average estimate was 3.6 children, only slightly higher than the average number of children wanted by the respondents. (These two figures will be nearly equal if some respondents exceed their family-size goals.) It is possible that the respondents referred to community norms in setting their own family-size goals, or it may be that their statement of the norms is a projection of their own desires. Husbands and the urban lower class, however, wanted substantially fewer children than they thought the average couple in their community would have. This is

probably due to the increasing economic burden of children on these two subgroups.

Respondents were also asked to state how many children they thought constituted a "small" family and a "large" family. For the total sample the mean number of children in a small family was 2.8, compared with 5.8 children in a large family. On both of these measures there was virtually no difference between husbands and wives; but between socioeconomic groups the differences were substantial: the rural and lower-class groups perceived a small family as having three children on the average, compared with 2.5 children as perceived by the middle class; and the lower-class and rural groups thought a large family comprised an average of six children, whereas for the middle class the average was five children. For all groups, however, the mean number of children wanted was somewhat larger than the mean number of children in a small family but much smaller than the mean number of children in a large family. It can therefore be concluded that large families were not very popular among any of the subgroups interviewed.

Beliefs attached to family-size preference

In addition to defining their notions of a small and a large family, respondents were asked to match certain characteristics of children with the family size (large or small) they thought fostered those characteristics. The results from this question are summarized in Table 5.2.

Many respondents were unable or unwilling to answer these questions, but in general middle-class respondents were able to differentiate effects of family size on the characters of children much better than the other two socioeconomic groups. Perhaps this was so because this group had more education and had given more thought to this subject in the process of formulating their own family-building decisions. Respondents' beliefs about which characteristics are associated with large and small families, however, tended to show the same trend across the three subgroups and between males and females in spite of differences in education and media exposure.

Respondents tended to believe that children who have a close relationship with their parents, are very happy, and have great confidence in themselves come from small families, whereas children who are popular with other children come from large families. Somewhat more respondents associated high intellectual ability and always wanting one's own way with children from small families than attributed these traits to children from large families. The sample was divided, however,

Table 5.2 Characteristics of children associated with small and large families

(Percentage of respondents who made specified associations, by subgroup)

Characteristic	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Open and loving toward other people						
Small family	28	37	33	37	29	33
Large family	33	35	41	39	33	36
High intellectual ability						
Small family	32	41	43	41	36	38
Large family	20	27	33	27	26	27
Popular with other children						
Small family	13	23	18	18	18	18
Large family	47	53	63	56	52	54
Close relationship with parents						
Small family	83	58	63	69	67	68
Large family	4	18	25	15	17	16
Always wants own way						
Small family	58	37	43	48	43 [a]	46
Large family	23	40	41	35	34	35
Great confidence in self						
Small family	32	39	48	39	40	40
Large family	23	28	30	28	26	27
Very happy						
Small family	62	49	58	57	56	56
Large family	14	33	31	27	25	26

about whether open and loving children are likely to be the product of large or small families.

Attitudes toward contraception and abortion

Respondents were asked a series of questions aimed at revealing their attitudes toward contraception and abortion. About three-quarters of

Table 5.3 Attitudes toward birth control
(Percentage of respondents who expressed specified attitudes, by subgroup)

Attitude	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Generally approve of married couples' using birth control[a]	89	66	58	u	u	76
Approve of birth control						
to delay birth of first child	63	48	31	42	53	48
to control spacing of births after first child	87	76	60	72	77	74
to prevent further pregnancies after desired parity is attained	98	93	87	92	94	93
Combined index of attitudes toward birth control[b]	9.6	8.0	7.1	8.1	8.3	8.2

u—unavailable.

a Three percent of the respondents had not heard of birth control and thus were not asked about their attitudes toward it.

b Index ranges from 1 (least favorable) to 11 (most favorable).

the Thai sample generally approved of married couples' using birth control (Table 5.3). Among the socioeconomic subgroups, the urban middle class had the most favorable attitude toward birth control (89 percent approving), the rural group the least favorable (58 percent). When asked about the practice of birth control in specific situations, respondents expressed a range of views. Fewer than half (48 percent) approved of birth control to delay the birth of the first child, but 74 percent approved of it for spacing subsequent births and 93 percent approved of it to prevent further pregnancies after a couple has the number of children they desire. Urban respondents were more likely than those in rural areas to approve of birth control in specific situations, just as those who were economically better off were more likely to approve than those who were poorer. The only significant difference between husbands and wives was that husbands were more likely to approve of birth control to delay the birth of the first child, which suggests that husbands were less motivated than wives to have the first child.

Scores on a combined index of attitudes toward birth control indicate clearly the subgroup differences in attitudes toward birth control practice. (For a description of the index, see Appendix B of Arnold et al., 1975:197.) The urban middle class approved most strongly, the rural group least strongly; the difference between husbands and wives was not significant.

Respondents were much less favorable toward abortion than toward the use of birth control, with almost no respondents approving the general idea of abortion to prevent an unwanted birth (Table 5.4). Nevertheless, there was considerable sentiment in favor of its use under specific circumstances, despite the fact that abortion is illegal in Thailand. More than two-thirds (69 percent) of the total sample approved of abortion if, in a physician's opinion, it would be dangerous for the wife to give birth again. Smaller percentages approved if preg-

Table 5.4 Attitudes toward abortion
(Percentage of respondents who expressed specified attitudes, by subgroup)

Attitude	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Generally approve of a married woman's having an abortion to prevent an unwanted birth[a]	7	4	0	2	5	4
Approve of abortion						
if doctor says it will be dangerous for woman to give birth again	87	53	60	64	73	69
if couple cannot afford another child	34	27	29	29	32	30
if pregnancy will interfere with woman's work or career	15	19	15	15	17	16
if pregnancy resulted from rape	63	42	43	54	48	51
Combined index of attitudes toward abortion[b]	5.6	4.1	4.2	4.5	4.7	4.6

a Twenty-one percent of respondents had not heard of abortion and thus were not asked about their attitudes toward it. Of those who had not heard of abortion, 40 percent were rural, 20 percent urban lower class, and 2 percent urban middle class. More women (24 percent) had not heard of abortion than men (17 percent).

b Index ranges from 1 (least favorable) to 13 (most favorable).

nancy resulted from rape (51 percent), if the couple could not afford another child (30 percent), and if pregnancy would interfere with the wife's work or career (16 percent). As in the case of birth control attitudes, approval of abortion was greater among the urban and economically better-off respondents than among rural and poorer respondents. Somewhat surprisingly, more husbands than wives approved of abortion in cases where pregnancy would be dangerous for the woman. According to a combined index of attitudes toward abortion, most Thai respondents had unfavorable attitudes, with disapproval being strongest among the rural group and weakest among the middle class. (For a description of the index, see Appendix B of Arnold et al., 1975: 198.)

Family planning knowledge and practices

Historically, the government of Thailand has been pronatalist, encouraging large families and a high rate of population growth. Only recently has the situation changed. In 1970 the Cabinet adopted a formal national population policy "to support voluntary family planning in order to help to resolve various problems related to the very high rate of population growth, which constitutes an important obstacle to the economic and social development of Thailand" (Ministry of Public Health, 1972). Since 1965, however, contraceptive methods have been offered to people throughout the country by interested governmental and private agencies. The methods include the IUD, pill, tubal ligation, vasectomy, condom, diaphragm, rhythm, and withdrawal. Recent statistics reported that close to 73 percent of all acceptors chose oral contraceptives and only 21 percent chose the IUD (Ministry of Public Health, 1972).

One purpose of the VOC survey was to gather information about respondents' knowledge and use of contraceptive methods in order to correlate this information with such variables as total number of children wanted, desired family size, and whether or not another child was wanted. Respondents were first asked whether they had heard of family planning, if they were currently practicing some form of birth control, what method or methods they were using or had used in the past, and whether they intended to practice birth control in the future. Then they were asked about their knowledge and use of specific methods.

About four-fifths of the Thai sample had practiced birth control at one time or another, and 70 percent were practicing some form of birth control at the time of the survey. Excluding the 12 percent who

were pregnant and the 5 percent who were not asked about birth control practice because they said they had never heard of it, practice was highest among the middle class (76 percent) and substantially lower among the lower-class and rural groups (55 and 50 percent, respectively). The level of practice for the rural sample, located close to Bangkok, was higher than would be expected in a typical Thai rural community.

Overall, the most familiar methods were the IUD, pill, and sterilization, whereas the most popular methods were the pill, rhythm, condom, and IUD (Table 5.5). In general, middle-class respondents had greater knowledge of and experience with contraceptive methods than the other subgroups. Within the middle class there was little difference between husbands and wives in knowledge and use of the specific methods, but among the lower-class and rural groups differences between husbands and wives were found for different methods.

All middle-class respondents and more than 90 percent of the other subgroups had heard of the IUD. Seventy percent of the middle class knew how it was used, but only 31 percent of rural respondents had that knowledge. Urban lower-class couples had used this method the most (31 percent), rural couples the least (7 percent), possibly in part because accessibility to medical and paramedical services is more limited in rural areas.

About as many people had heard about the pill as about the IUD, but more respondents in all subgroups knew how it was used and had actually used the method. Use was greatest among the urban middle class (63 percent had practiced this method), somewhat lower among lower-class and rural couples (45 and 34 percent, respectively). The pill is generally considered to be effective and convenient, and to cause fewer undesirable side effects than the IUD. These advantages may explain its popularity among the Thai sample.

Male and female sterilization were widely known about by all subgroups, but relatively few respondents had used these methods. Rural respondents had the highest rate of acceptance of vasectomy (16 percent), urban lower-class respondents the lowest rate (4 percent). Tubal ligation, on the other hand, was most prevalent among the middle class (18 percent) and lowest among the rural group (3 percent). Since sterilization is recommended for preventing rather than for spacing future births, it is not surprising that most couples in the VOC samples had not adopted the method.

Knowledge and use of the condom varied among the socioeconomic subsamples. Middle-class respondents had heard of it, knew how it was

Table 5.5 Knowledge and use of contraceptive methods
(Percentage of respondents who had knowledge of and had used specified methods, by subgroup)

Method and knowledge	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
IUD						
Had heard about method	100	97	94	98	96	97
Knew how it is used	70	58	31	56	50	53
Had used method	24	31	7	23	18	21
PILL						
Had heard about method	99	95	95	94	98	97
Knew how it is used	93	77	65	81	79	80
Had used method	63	45	34	49	46	47
TUBAL LIGATION						
Had heard about method	99	96	91	94	97	95
Knew how it is used	84	57	40	60	62	61
Had used method	18	12	3	11	11	11
VASECTOMY						
Had heard about method	98	91	89	91	95	93
Knew how it is used	81	47	44	48	68	58
Had used method	11	4	16	9	11	10
CONDOM						
Had heard about method	98	61	58	65	82	73
Knew how it is used	88	43	29	42	66	54
Had used method	49	16	3	22	24	23
RHYTHM						
Had heard about method	96	49	34	55	65	60
Knew how it is used	80	34	19	39	51	45
Had used method	53	17	5	21	29	25
WITHDRAWAL						
Had heard about method	93	45	32	48	67	57
Knew how it is used	80	34	21	36	55	46
Had used method	23	13	7	14	16	15
DIAPHRAGM						
Had heard about method	72	32	29	39	50	45
Knew how it is used	34	17	6	15	24	19
Had used method	0	2	1	1	1	1
Percentage currently practicing contraception[a]	89	61	59	72	68	70
Percentage who had discussed contraception with spouse	90	77	75	75	87	81
Percentage who reported that close friends and relatives used contraception	82	75	63	77	69	73

a Seventeen percent of the respondents were not asked whether they were currently practicing contraception, either because the wife was pregnant (12 percent) or because they had not heard of contraception (5 percent). Percentages currently practicing, therefore, are based on the remaining 83 percent of the total sample.

used, and had much more experience with this method than the other two subsamples. This finding may be related to the fact that condoms were not easy for rural inhabitants to obtain in Thailand at the time of this survey. In addition, condoms of good quality were beyond the means of farmers and the lower class.

The rhythm method seemed to be well known to only the middle class. A minority of lower-class and rural respondents had heard about it and knew how it was practiced. The proportion of respondents who had ever used this method was considerably higher among the middle class (53 percent) than among the lower class (17 percent), and was negligible among rural respondents (5 percent). Knowledge of withdrawal followed the same pattern as rhythm – that is, widespread among the middle class and limited among the lower-class and rural groups. Fewer respondents, however, had practiced this method than had practiced rhythm, except among the rural group.

The diaphragm was known to nearly three-quarters of middle-class respondents and only to about 30 percent of the lower-class and rural groups. Lower percentages of these samples knew how it was used, but practically none had ever used it.

In all subgroups communication between spouses concerning contraception had occurred among a large majority of respondents. The high rate of communication on this topic, which is more characteristic of modern than of traditional couples, may be related to the location of the VOC sample groups near the capital city. Communication about family planning outside the marital relationship also appears to have been prevalent, for approximately the same number of respondents in each subgroup reported that close friends and relatives used contraception as reported having discussed contraception with their spouse.

Data on the timing of births and the time of first use of contraception are shown in Table 5.6. The main difference in birth intervals is shown in the timing of the first birth, with the middle class having an interval about seven months longer than that of the rural group, on the average. This difference is consistent with the trend shown in timing of the first use of contraception. It should be noted, however, that the later intervals seem unrelated to the differences in reported use of contraception. The data reported here are really not adequate for analysis of the factors affecting birth intervals, since such influential factors as abortion, stillbirths, and abstention are not taken into account. Some misreporting is also apparent, as revealed by the differences between husbands and wives on certain variables.

Perhaps of greatest interest are the different patterns in first contraceptive use. More than 60 percent of the middle class had begun prac-

Table 5.6 Timing of births and first use of contraception

Measure	Urban middle	Urban lower	Rural	Female	Male	All respondents
Birth intervals (mean number of months)						
Between marriage and first birth	21.5	18.9	13.6	20.3	15.9	18.1
Between first and second birth	24.2	25.6	27.0	25.7	25.6	25.7
Between second and third birth	30.1	25.7	27.1	27.4	27.9	27.6
Initial contraceptive use (percentage of respondents who ever initiated use)						
Before first child	12	6	1	4	11	7
After first child	51	23	6	29	31	30
After second child	20	21	39	26	25	26
After third child	11	24	12	17	13	15
After fourth child	6	17	19	14	12	13
After fifth or subsequent child	0	10	23	10	9	9

ticing before the second child was born, compared with 7 percent of the rural group. These differences presumably reflect a greater awareness of the benefits of spacing, as well as an orientation toward birth planning that is conducive to decisions in favor of smaller families.

Relationship of family-size and family planning variables to background variables

Up to this point, family-size and family planning variables have been analyzed by dividing the sample into subgroups based on socioeconomic status and sex. The variables have been found to be related to socioeconomic status but not usually related to sex. In the present section, family-size and family planning variables are analyzed for correlation with specific background characteristics of the respondents. Table 5.7 summarizes the results. The background variables are divided into socioeconomic items that can be measured objectively (e.g., years of schooling) and more subjective variables indicating socio-psychological orientation (e.g., overall modernity and decision-mindedness).

Correlations were found to be low to moderate, but many were sig-

Table 5.7 Correlations of background variables with family planning and family-size variables

Background variables	Family planning variables					Family-size variables	
	Combined birth control attitudes	Combined abortion attitudes	Birth control methods known	Birth control methods understood	Birth control methods ever used	Desired family size	Ideal family size
Socioeconomic							
Education	.42**	.30**	.60**	.64**	.56**	−.23**	−.15*
Wife's employment experience	−.06	.00	.00	−.01	.01	.30**	.09
Age at marriage	.27**	.13†	.37**	.41**	.35**	−.21**	−.14*
Income	.29**	.24**	.47**	.41**	.44**	−.11†	−.09†
Number of modern goods owned	.46**	.32**	.60**	.55**	.42**	−.09	−.12
Urban experience	.24**	.16*	.36**	.42**	.41**	−.11†	−.01
Socio-psychological[a]							
Overall modernity	.26**	.12†	.41**	.42**	.35**	−.18**	−.12*
Decision-mindedness	.16**	.13†	−.03	.04	.00	−.01	−.11†
Fatalism	−.22**	−.21**	−.38**	−.41**	−.43**	.14*	.16**
Small-family press	.30**	.20**	.44**	.47**	.42**	−.18**	−.11†
Mass media exposure	.23**	.13†	.46**	.45**	.31**	−.15*	−.06
Educational aspiration for son(s)	.18*	.18*	.36**	.35**	.40**	−.07	−.07
Educational aspiration for daughter(s)	.31**	.28**	.41**	.43**	.43**	−.16*	−.12†

† Significant at .05 level.

* Significant at .01 level.

** Significant at .001 level.

a The components of these indices are described in Appendix B of Arnold et al. (1975).

nificant at the .001 level. In nearly all cases background variables were correlated positively with family planning items and negatively with family-size variables. Of the socioeconomic background variables, the one having the strongest correlations with family planning and family-size variables is education, followed by number of modern goods owned. Age at marriage, family income, and urban experience are also correlated positively with family planning and negatively with family size. The weakest socioeconomic background item is wife's employment experience, which also shows a surprising positive correlation with family size. This may be attributable to the high proportion of working wives in our rural sample.

Of the socio-psychological variables, relatively strong and consistently significant correlations are shown for modernity, fatalism, small-family press, and educational aspirations for daughters. These orientations are all related in the expected direction to knowledge, attitude, and practice of family planning and to family size. The lowest correlations occur with decision-mindedness, suggesting that this is not a very useful measure of socio-psychological orientation in Thailand.

6

the social context, the value of children, and fertility

In the last section of Chapter 5, correlational analyses were used to show relationships between background data on the one hand and family planning and family-size variables on the other. This chapter takes a further step by including values of children in the system. Correlational analyses are used to show the strength of relationships among pairs of variables, including VOC variables, and multiple regression analyses are used to assess the predictive power of the VOC variables when background characteristics are controlled. These analyses are intended to yield a preliminary understanding of the relationship of the value of children to respondents' background or social context, and to their family planning and fertility experience.

Antecedent and consequent correlates of the value of children

Correlational analysis was applied to gain insight into how respondents formed their attitudes toward children and to assess the extent to which these attitudes influenced their family planning and fertility behavior. Although the present study was not designed to resolve these issues fully, some feeling for important underlying relationships can be gained through correlational analysis. Variables were classified into three clusters—background, value-of-children (VOC), and family planning or fertility variables—as antecedent, intervening, and consequent variables, respectively.

In Table 6.1, two sets of VOC variables—the nine common subscales derived from a factor analysis of VOC data in all six countries (see Exhibit 3.C) and reasons for wanting and for not wanting another child—are correlated with selected background and fertility variables. The background variables are education, urban experience, and modernity;[1] the two fertility-related variables are general birth control attitude and total number of children wanted. As shown in Table 6.1, more highly educated respondents, those who had lived in cities longer, and those who were modern generally, tended to be less concerned with the traditional values of children than were other respondents. They appeared to de-emphasize the importance of children for providing continuity, tradition, security, role motivations, and social status. More modernized respondents and those with more schooling attached less importance than others to children as a source of happiness and affection, probably because they could find happiness and affection in other ways as well. Among the background variables, education appears to be the best indicator, being correlated with seven out of the nine VOC subscales. Respondents with higher levels of education tended to give less emphasis to parenthood satisfactions than others. Although nearly all respondents were aware of the high cost of raising children, less modernized respondents worried more about these costs, probably because they had fewer resources and also had larger families to support. (The correlation coefficient between modernity and parity equals −.15, which is significant at .01.) More educated, urbanized, and modern respondents tended to be less influenced than others by normative pressures. The decision-mindedness index did not produce correlations in the expected direction, but as noted earlier this index may not be a valid measure.

A similar pattern is reflected in the clusters of reasons for wanting and not wanting an additional child. Compared with the VOC subscales, which represent normative and general dimensions of the value of children, reasons for wanting or not wanting another child were more personal and specific. As expected, more educated, urbanized, and modern respondents tended to give less importance to traditional reasons for wanting another child. The same respondents also tended to give less importance to reasons for not wanting another child, perhaps because they had fewer children and more resources for raising another child. They were particularly unlikely to want additional children for economic help, for care in old age, out of a sense of religious

1 Modernity is a measure of current attitudes, but it is considered to reflect past experience. It can also be treated as an intervening variable.

Table 6.1 Correlations of value-of-children variables with selected background and fertility measures

VOC variables	Education	Urban experience	Overall modernity	General birth control attitude	Total number of children wanted
Value-of-children subscales[a]					
1 Continuity, tradition, security	−.46*	−.25*	−.25*	−.20*	.04
2 Parenthood satisfactions	−.22*	−.08	−.06	−.03	.04
3 Role motivations	−.33*	−.20*	−.17*	−.11†	.03
4 Happiness, affection	−.20*	.02	−.12*	−.04	.10†
5 Goals, incentives from children	.06	.03	.06	.00	−.06
6 Social status from children	−.49*	−.29*	−.33*	−.22*	.15*
7 External controls on childbearing	−.55*	−.27*	−.39*	−.18*	.12*
8 Costs of children	−.07	−.06	−.10†	.16*	.05
9 Decision-mindedness in childbearing	−.24*	−.17*	−.17*	.02	.01
Reasons for wanting another child					
Enjoy having a small baby	.10†	.06	.01	.13*	−.09†
To help carry on family name and traditions	−.13*	−.10†	−.12†	−.13*	.01
Want a boy/another boy	−.04	−.03	−.03	−.10†	.00
Want a girl/another girl	.07	.02	.06	.04	.03
Relatives feel I should have more children	−.11†	−.04	−.06	.00	.05
To have a child to help me in my old age	−.44**	−.32**	−.28**	−.22**	.04
My religious duty to have children	−.41**	−.26**	−.25**	−.24**	.13*
One more person to help family economically	−.46**	−.34**	−.37**	−.25**	.10†
To make my marriage stronger	−.37**	−.15*	−.24**	−.11†	.01
To provide a companion for my children	.07	.05	−.03	−.02	−.09†
Enjoy caring for, raising children	−.08†	−.01	−.05	−.02	.01
Spouse wants more children	.00	.05	−.10†	−.07	−.11†

Table 6.1 *(continued)*

VOC variables	Education	Urban experience	Overall modernity	General birth control attitude	Total number of children wanted
Reasons for wanting another child *(continued)*					
Fun to have children around the house	.04	.04	.02	.01	.00
Raising children helps me learn about life and myself	−.14*	−.09†	−.11†	−.11†	.01
To have special feeling of love between parent and child	−.06	−.09†	−.10†	−.09†	.03
To share what I have and know with children	−.12*	−.14†	−.07	−.14*	.07
To have enough children survive to adulthood	−.21**	−.20**	−.14*	−.18*	−.03
Reasons for not wanting another child					
Would be financial burden to family	−.30**	−.15*	−.18**	−.05	.08
Spouse does not want more	−.23**	−.17**	−.14*	−.03	.06
Would restrict my freedom to do other things I enjoy	−.34**	−.25**	−.22**	−.04	.02
Would be a lot of work, bother for me	−.27**	−.18**	−.13*	−.03	.07
Could not spend as much time with spouse	−.29**	−.24**	−.15*	−.08	.03
Concern about overpopulation	−.12*	−.15*	−.06	−.01	−.05
Would be emotional strain for me	−.26**	−.12*	−.15*	.07	.02
Would not be able to give enough care, attention to other children	−.14*	−.11†	−.06	.00	−.05
Would cause problems, strains between me and spouse	−.24**	−.11†	−.20*	.00	.03

† Significant at .05 level.

* Significant at .01 level.

** Significant at .001 level.

a See Exhibit 3.C for items included in each of the subscales.

duty, in order to strengthen the marriage bond, to have enough children survive to adulthood, or for continuing the family name and traditions. This group of respondents also attached more importance than more traditional respondents to concern about overpopulation and not being able to give enough attention to other children, but attached less importance to all other reasons for not wanting another child.

If we look at correlations of the VOC subscales with the consequent fertility-related variables, we find that most of the correlations are weaker than those between the background, or antecedent, variables and the values of children. Respondents who expressed more traditional beliefs about children—that is, those who believed that children would provide them with social status, continuity of family name, tradition, security, and role motivations—tended to have a less favorable attitude toward birth control than others. In particular, those who believed that children would provide them with social status and those who were more susceptible to external controls on childbearing tended to have a less favorable attitude to birth control and wanted larger families. On the other hand, respondents who were especially concerned about the costs of raising children expressed a favorable attitude toward birth control. No significant correlation is found between costs of children and total number of children wanted. The lack of such a relationship might be due to a decision, on the part of those who thought that children were costly, to lower their family-size goals. Decision-mindedness in childbearing does not bear any significant relation with fertility-related measures, even though it is associated with the background variables.

Compared with the VOC subscales, reasons for wanting or not wanting another child are even less strongly related to the fertility-related measures. In particular, reasons for not wanting another child are not significantly associated with either a general birth control attitude or the total number of children wanted. Three reasons for wanting another child that are significantly correlated with both wanted family size and birth control attitude are religious duty to have children, expected economic help, and enjoyment from having a small baby. As expected, respondents who said that it was their religious duty to have children and those expecting economic help from children tended to have an unfavorable attitude toward birth control and wanted large families. Those who enjoyed having a small baby, however, expressed a favorable attitude toward birth control and wanted small families.

In summary, most of the value-of-children dimensions are found to be significantly correlated with background factors and, to a lesser ex-

tent, fertility-related variables. In particular, respondents who had more schooling, had spent a larger portion of their lives in urban areas, and were more modernized, generally showed less concern than others about the traditional values of children. The same respondents gave less importance to the "traditional" reasons for wanting another child, but they also rated low in importance most of the reasons for *not* wanting another child.

Relation of economic values of children to background and fertility

Simple correlations were computed between economic dimensions of the value of children and both background and fertility-related variables. Four indices of economic costs and benefits of children were selected for this purpose.

Economic costs of children. This index is composed of four items dealing with the perceived economic burden of the number of children wanted, the financial burden of having another child, the financial burden of educating one's children, and the financial burden of raising children in general.

Number of children that would be a heavy economic burden. The index refers to the smallest number of children that the respondents believed would be a heavy burden for them to raise. (The higher the index, the *less* was the perceived burden.)

Expected economic help from children. This consists of six items related to expected economic help from sons and daughters, expected economic support in old age, and economic help expected from an additional child.

Decreased utility of children. The index is a linear combination of responses to questions about the changing economic usefulness of children over time. High scores on this index imply that respondents perceived children to have become much less useful economically since the time when the respondents were growing up.

Intercorrelation of the economic indices reveals that perception of economic costs is related to the perception that, even at lower levels of parity, children are already a heavy financial burden, and is related also to expected economic help from children (Table 6.2). The significant negative correlation between expected economic help from chil-

Table 6.2 Correlations of economic indices of the value of children with background, fertility, and birth control variables

Variable	Index			
	Economic costs of children	Number of children that would be heavy economic burden	Expected economic help from children	Decreased utility of children
Economic costs and benefits				
Economic costs of children	1.00			
Number of children that would be heavy economic burden	−.25**	1.00		
Expected economic help from children	.24**	.00	1.00	
Decreased utility of children	−.01	−.07	−.11†	1.00
Background characteristics				
Education	−.23**	−.04	−.71**	.06
Income	−.23**	−.02	−.58**	.03
Urban experience	−.16*	−.01	−.46**	.12*
Duration of marriage	.27**	.11*	.28**	.02
Wife's employment experience	.09	.21*	−.02	−.04
Fertility and family planning				
Number of children wanted	.35**	.28**	.16*	−.05
Number of children ideal	.06	.39**	.06	−.09†
Parity	.35**	.20**	.25**	−.05
Number of contraceptive methods ever used	−.03	−.06	−.45**	.09†
Number of contraceptive methods known	−.03	.04	−.46**	.03
Combined attitudes toward birth control	.05	−.20**	−.36**	.08
Combined attitudes toward abortion	.04	−.04	−.25**	−.02

† Significant at .05 level.

* Significant at .01 level.

** Significant at .05 level.

dren and decreased utility of children suggests that those who expected help were less likely to believe that their children would not be willing to give such help.

Correlation of the economic indices with background characteristics shows that respondents with more schooling, higher income, and more time spent in urban areas felt the costs of children significantly less than others. This does not mean that more "modern" parents spent less money on their children; in fact the opposite is true. Rather, more modern couples expected to have fewer children and had more resources to care for them, so that the economic burden was not so great for them. These parents were also unlikely to expect economic help from their children. Couples who had been married longer felt more burdened by the economic costs of children than others, probably because they had more children and their children were older, so that the costs were more of a reality for them and consequently they expected economic help from their children.

Economic costs of children are positively related to the number of children wanted and to parity, indicating that couples who had decided to have large families felt most burdened by the high costs of raising children. Although the number of children that would be a heavy economic burden and the economic costs of children are found to be negatively related to each other, they both bear similar relationships to fertility measures. Evidently, those couples who believed they could afford to raise a large number of children actually had more children than other couples; or conversely, those who had more children believed they could afford to raise large families. Nevertheless, these two indices of the economic value of children are not significantly related to most of the family planning measures.

The most useful economic VOC index is expected economic help from children. In addition to showing strong relationships to most of the background characteristics of respondents, it is significantly related to both family-size and family planning measures. Parents who expected economic help from their children tended to have larger families than others and were less receptive to contraception and abortion, had less contraceptive knowledge, and were unlikely to be using contraception to prevent pregnancy at the time of the interview.

The decreased-utility-of-children index is not related to background, family-size, or birth control variables in most cases. It is positively related to education, urban experience, number of contraceptive methods ever used, and combined attitudes toward birth control, but is negatively related to the ideal number of children (the number of chil-

dren respondents would have wanted if they had been able to begin their families again).

As stated at the beginning of this section, background and fertility-related variables were entered into a correlational matrix as antecedent and consequent correlates, respectively, of the values of children, the purpose being to determine whether the values may be conceived of as a function of socioeconomic background and also as influencing fertility. That significant correlations exist in both cases suggests that this hypothesis is plausible and deserves further testing in the Thai context. For example, such background characteristics as occupation, living standards, and education are likely to influence the values placed on children. Farmers are likely to regard their children as potential labor having economic value, whereas middle-class parents are more aware of the costs of rearing children in a city like Bangkok. The urban lower-class group is caught in a conflict of values, for most of them are migrants from rural areas, with rural attitudes toward children, but face the high cost of childrearing in Bangkok. The financial constraints of their new situation may well have an effect on their consequent fertility behavior.

Determinants of family planning and family size

A multivariate analysis technique was used to examine relationships between socio-demographic characteristics and the value-of-children variables on one hand, and fertility-related variables on the other. Before presenting those data, we must stress that in this exploratory study there was no intention to confirm or deny hypotheses about micro-level determinants of fertility and family planning or to test rigorously a particular value-of-children model. Rather, the intention was to examine the extent to which people's feelings about children seem to influence their family-size goals and their receptivity to the use of contraception to achieve those goals, and to uncover promising variables that would be used in subsequent larger surveys where multivariate analysis would be a major aim.

Six fertility-related variables were selected as dependent variables. They have been grouped under two headings, family size and family planning. (The family-size variables include parity (number of living children, plus one if wife was currently pregnant[2]), number of additional children wanted, and total number of children wanted (the sum

2 Although parity is usually defined as the number of pregnancies a woman has had that resulted in a live-born child, in the VOC Study the term is used more broadly, since child mortality was rare among the couples sampled.

of the first two variables). The family planning variables consist of number of contraceptive methods known (summed scores on whether respondent claimed knowledge of the IUD, pill, condom, diaphragm, rhythm, withdrawal, vasectomy, and tubal ligation), general birth control attitude (strength of approval or disapproval of married couples' practicing contraception), and current use of contraception (whether or not respondent was using any method at the time of the interview).

For each dependent variable, step-wise regression analyses were run successively with the three sets of independent, or predictor, variables. The first consists of socio-demographic variables—respondent's age, income (total family income in past year), education (highest grade of formal schooling completed), urban experience (percentage of life lived in urban areas), media exposure (frequency of exposure to newspapers, radio, and television), and marriage duration. When the dependent variable was the number of additional children wanted, parity was also included as a control variable and was entered first. The second set, economic VOC variables, comprises the economic burden of education (whether providing education for one's children will be a very heavy financial burden, somewhat heavy, or fairly easy), the smallest number of children that would be a heavy economic burden to raise, expected economic help from children, decreased utility of children, and higher utility of larger families (whether respondent said that families with more children are better off economically). The third set is socio-psychological VOC variables, including continuity, tradition, security; parenthood satisfactions; role motivations; happiness and affection; goals and incentives from children; social status from children; external controls on childbearing; costs of children; decision-mindedness in childbearing; reasons for wanting another child (summed scores on the importance of 17 reasons for wanting another child); reasons for not wanting another child (summed scores on nine reasons for not wanting another child); and benefits to children of a large family (summed scores on beliefs that children from large families are more open and loving, more intellectual, more popular, have closer relationships with parents, have greater self-confidence, and are happier than children from small families).

Since the step-wise regression technique[3] employed in this multivariate analysis may be unfamiliar, we should explain our procedure and some necessary statistical terms. It is sometimes described as a method of entering variables successively in all possible orders (Draper

3 What we call "step-wise regression" some authors call "stage-wise regression" (see, for example, Goldberger, 1968:37).

and Smith, 1966:171–172). The computer program begins by considering the independent variable that has the highest simple correlation (r) with the dependent variable. In this study, our program was designed to enter blocks of variables in a predetermined order, so that the influence of each block could be assessed. For each dependent variable, the socio-demographic block is entered first, followed by the economic VOC block and the socio-psychological VOC block–except for the case of number of additional children wanted, in which parity is entered first for control purposes.

In Tables 6.3 through 6.5, the coefficients of determination (R^2) and standardized regression coefficients (betas) from the final step of the analysis are presented for each dependent variable. The coefficient of determination shows how much of the total variation in the dependent variable has been explained by each set of independent variables, whereas the beta coefficient shows how important a particular independent variable is to the dependent variable, taking into account other independent variables in the equation. It is important to realize that the size of a regression coefficient is no measure of the importance of a particular independent variable, for it can be changed at will by measuring the variable in different units.

To provide an overview of the determinants of fertility-related variables, we will first discuss the amount of variance (R^2) in the six dependent variables explained by the predictor variables in the step-wise regression analyses. Afterward, step-wise regression analyses of the relationship between the socio-demographic and VOC variables on the one hand, and family planning and family-size variables on the other, will be presented.

Levels of prediction

The proportion of variance (R^2) in selected family planning and family-size variables is presented in Table 6.3 to show the predictive power of the socio-demographic and VOC variables. Overall, the socio-demographic variables by themselves explain between 10 and 53 percent of variance in the dependent variables. They show their strongest effects on dependent variables that reflect past behavior–that is, on the number of contraceptive methods known and on parity. In contrast, prediction by socio-demographic variables of current behavior and future expectation–current use of contraception and number of additional children wanted–is rather weak. Intermediate levels of prediction are noted for the two variables that reflect current attitudes or combine past behavior and future expectation–general birth control attitude and total number of children wanted.

Table 6.3 Prediction of selected family planning and family-size variables, as shown by proportion of variance explained (R^2)

Predictor variables	Family planning variables			Family-size variables		
	Number of contraceptive methods known	General attitude toward birth control	Current use of contraception	Parity	Number of additional children wanted	Total number of children wanted
Parity	u	u	u	na	.07	u
Socio-demographic	.40	.16	.10	.53	.10	.23
Socio-demographic + economic value of children	.41	.22	.15	.57	.18	.30
Socio-demographic + economic + socio-psychological value of children	.45	.26	.18	.58[a]	.29	.32[a]
Economic value of children	.23	u	.11	u	.08	u
Socio-psychological value of children	.29	u	.10	u	.20	u

u—unavailable. Variable not included or analysis not performed.

na—not applicable.

a Ten VOC socio-psychological dimensions (reasons for wanting and not wanting another child not included).

When the economic value-of-children variables are added, the percentage of variance explained increases proportionally across the dependent variables from 2.5 percent (in the case of number of contraceptive methods known) to 80 percent (for number of additional children wanted). Substantial further increments are shown for the broad array of variables including social, psychological, and economic dimensions of the value of children. Across the dependent variables, the percentage of variance explained increases from 9.4 percent (in the case of number of contraceptive methods known and parity) to 190 percent (for number of additional children wanted).

In addition to the above analysis, two points should be mentioned here. First, the social, psychological, and economic dimensions of the value of children do very well in explaining additional variance for current attitude and expectation (as measured by general birth control attitude and number of additional children wanted), current behavior (as measured by current use of birth control), and past behavior and future expectation combined (as measured by number of children wanted). As noted above, the socio-demographic variables show relatively stronger effects on dependent variables that reflect past behavior—i.e., number of contraceptive methods known and number of living children (parity). This finding was expected, for as Arnold and Fawcett (1975:121) have noted, "... the number of children a person has is the cumulative result of past actions, whereas the VOC Study measures only present perceptions of the satisfactions and costs of children. To the extent that these perceptions change over the life cycle, one would expect parity to be more strongly related to the socio-demographic factors, which are relatively immutable."

Finally, it should be mentioned that although the economic and socio-psychological VOC variables substantially improve the prediction of each of the birth control and family-size measures, the increased explanatory power is due in large part to the influence of the perceived economic costs and benefits of children rather than of the socio-psychological values associated with children. However, the socio-psychological values of children have a strong influence on fertility motivation, especially on the additional number of children wanted. (It should also be noted that the "socio-psychological" block includes economic dimensions.)

In summary, data on variance explained (R^2) show that value-of-children dimensions do have substantial predictive effects on certain fertility and family planning variables, independent of the effects of socio-demographic factors. With respect to the total level of prediction

by all independent variables, the dependent variables in the two clusters that are best predicted are number of contraceptive methods known and parity. Components of prediction will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Prediction of family planning

Employing a KAP (knowledge, attitude, and practice) conceptual framework used in family planning studies, we present in this section the final standardized regression coefficients (betas) for three regressions in which the predictor variables are socio-demographic characteristics, economic values of children, and socio-psychological values of children (Table 6.4). The dependent variables are number of contraceptive methods known, general attitude toward birth control, and current use of contraception. Among the socio-demographic variables, education bore a significant positive relationship to the number of contraceptive methods known and general birth control attitude, but it had no influence on current use of birth control. Respondents who had experienced more frequent media exposure were more knowledgeable about contraception than others. This latter finding is easily understandable since contraception for spacing and limiting family size is widely discussed in Bangkok newspapers and on radio and television by the government family planning agencies and private organizations. Media exposure was a significant determinant of birth control attitudes and whether or not contraception was being used, but the strength of the relationship was not so impressive. In addition to education and media exposure, age was negatively related to general birth control attitude and current use of contraception, while it had little to do with knowledge of contraceptive methods. Marriage duration was the most important socio-demographic determinant of current family planning practice. The longer respondents were married, the more likely they were to be practicing contraception at the time of the interview. Urban experience was related to family planning knowledge, attitudes, and practice in the same way as media exposure. Income was positively and significantly related to the number of contraceptive methods known and current practice of birth control, but it had little to do with general birth control attitudes.

Most of the economic value-of-children measures were related to both the attitudinal and the behavioral measures of family planning in the expected direction. Respondents who expected to be economically reliant on their children had less knowledge of contraception, were less receptive to family planning, and were less likely to be

Table 6.4 Prediction of selected family planning variables, as shown by standardized regression coefficients (betas)

Predictor variables	Dependent variables: Number of contraceptive methods known	General attitude toward birth control	Current use of contraception
Socio-demographic			
Age	−.01	−.15*	−.12*
Income	.06*	.03	.09*
Education	.34*	.26*	.03
Urban experience	.07*	.06†	.10*
Media exposure	.18*	.04†	.04†
Marriage duration	.02	.04†	.23*
Economic VOC			
Economic burden of children's education	−.03†	−.07*	.10*
Smallest number of children that would be heavy economic burden	.07*	−.15*	−.10*
Expected economic help from children	−.05†	−.17*	−.31*
Decreased utility of children	.00	−.05†	.01
Utility of large family	.01	−.04†	.07†
Socio-psychological VOC			
Continuity, tradition, security	.05†	−.02	.10*
Parenthood satisfactions	−.02	.08*	.10*
Role motivations	.05*	.00	−.07†
Happiness, affection	−.08*	−.02	−.10*
Goals, incentives from children	.03*	−.03	.05†
Social status from children	−.07*	−.04†	.03
External controls on childbearing	−.05*	.02	−.10*
Costs of children	.19*	.15*	.05†
Decision-mindedness in childbearing	.00	.03	.03
Reasons for wanting another child	−.02	−.03	−.06†
Reasons for not wanting another child	−.04†	.11*	−.01
Benefits of large family	−.03	.04†	.02
R^2	.45†	.26†	.18

† Significant at .05 level.

* Significant at .01 level.

practicing it at the time of the interview than other respondents. Respondents who perceived the economic burden of children to be great, either specifically for education or more generally, were more likely to be practicing some form of contraception than others for whom the economic burden was not so great. (Note that for the index "smallest number of children that would be a heavy economic burden" the higher the index the *less* the perceived burden, so that the interpretation is reversed from that of the educational index.) The relationships between these two indices of costs of children and the measures of contraceptive knowledge and attitudes are not consistently in the expected direction. The measures of costs of children are difficult to interpret, especially concerning causality with fertility variables. Some people may perceive high costs because they have had many children and are experiencing the costs. Others may anticipate the costs and practice contraception and plan to have few children. Additional measures and specially controlled analyses are needed to understand fully the meaning of these indices of the costs of children.

The beta coefficients for VOC socio-psychological variables are smaller than for the strongest of the socio-demographic and VOC economic variables, although about two-thirds of the beta coefficients for socio-psychological variables are significant. As was shown in Table 6.3, the overall increment in prediction of family planning variables by socio-psychological variables was small, ranging from .03 to .04. It is of interest that the item with the strongest consistent relationship to family planning variables is the index of "costs of children," which includes components of economic, emotional, and opportunity costs. Persons who gave high ratings to those costs were more knowledgeable about contraception, more favorable toward it, and somewhat more likely to be practicing

Of the four VOC socio-psychological indices that are related at the .01 level to use of contraception, two are in the expected direction and two are not so clearcut. Those who stressed happiness and affection from children and those who regarded childbearing as being controlled by external forces were less likely to be practicing contraception. However, those who stressed parenthood satisfactions and the continuity, tradition, and security from children were more likely to be practicing contraception. The positive relationship between parenthood satisfactions and family planning can reasonably be explained by an emphasis on child quality instead of quantity. The findings for the scale on continuity, tradition, and security are probably confounded by the effects of parity, which is not controlled in this analy-

sis. As will be shown subsequently, those scoring high on this scale already had more children but wanted fewer additional children. Thus, they were more likely to be practicing birth control.

Prediction of family size

The data presented in this section pertain to three family-size measures considered as dependent variables: number of living children (parity), number of additional children wanted, and total number of children wanted. These variables are chosen for more detailed analysis because of their differing psychological implications. Parity may be viewed as an indicator of past fertility behavior. The number of additional children desired appears to be the best available indicator of current fertility motivations and as such should be closely related to current perceptions of the value of children. The total number of children wanted represents a combination of the previous two measures and should approximate respondents' total fertility at some future time.

Table 6.5 shows the standardized regression coefficients (betas) for regressions on the three fertility variables, at the final step of which all three sets of predictors are included for each variable. Among the socio-demographic variables, marriage duration was by far the most important determinant of family size for the Thai sample. The longer respondents were married, the more children they had but the fewer additional children they wanted to have. Beyond the influence of duration of marriage, age had significant effects on actual, desired, and expected family size in the expected direction.

Education was significantly and negatively associated with parity and total number of children wanted. Media exposure significantly affected respondents' fertility behavior and motivations. Urban experience affected only the number of living children (parity), whereas income did not significantly affect respondents' fertility behavior and motivation at all.

For the two measures of costs of children the interpretation of causality is again difficult. Those who thought they could afford a larger number of children actually had more children and expected to have a larger family. This could reflect "rational" planning behavior, or it could reflect "rationalization" in economic terms of a family size desired for other reasons. Those who perceived a heavy burden for educating children already had more children, which is realistic, but they wanted additional children. For some respondents, it appears that educational costs were not a barrier to a large family but were recognized as a future cost.

Table 6.5 Prediction of selected family-size variables, as shown by standardized regression coefficients (betas)

Predictor variables	Dependent variables		
	Parity	Number of additional children wanted	Total number of children wanted
Parity	na	−.08*	u
Socio-demographic			
Age	.17*	.05†	.14*
Income	.04	.03	.03
Education	−.19*	−.04	−.13*
Urban experience	.06†	−.03	.02
Media exposure	−.07*	.08*	−.05†
Marriage duration	.55*	−.21*	.32*
Economic VOC			
Economic burden of children's education	.11*	.06*	.13*
Smallest number of children that would be heavy economic burden	.16*	.17*	.27*
Expected economic help from children	−.02	.01	.05
Decreased utility of children	−.04	.11*	.00
Utility of large family	.00	.11*	.04
Socio-psychological VOC			
Continuity, tradition, security	.13*	−.13*	−.04
Parenthood satisfactions	−.03	.02	.00
Role motivations	−.12*	−.01	−.10*
Happiness, affection	.02	.05†	.07*
Goals, incentives from children	−.07*	−.04†	−.06†
Social status from children	.00	−.08*	−.05†
External controls on childbearing	−.06†	.02	−.04
Costs of children	.05†	.03	.06†
Decision-mindedness in childbearing	−.03	.01	−.04
Reasons for wanting another child	u	.30*	u
Reasons for not wanting another child	u	−.18*	u
Benefits of large family	.04	−.01	.08*
R^2	.58	.29*	.33

u—unavailable.

na—not applicable.

† Significant at .05 level.

* Significant at .01 level.

Utility of a large family had a positive effect on the number of additional children wanted—that is, respondents who perceived a large family to have great utility wanted more additional children than other respondents. However, the positive relationship between decreased utility of children and the number of additional children wanted contradicts the above finding. The one remaining economic VOC variable, expected economic help from children, was not significantly related to any of the dependent variables.

Individual socio-psychological values of children appear to have substantial influence on the number of additional children wanted. (In Table 6.3, the amount of variance explained was shown to increase from .18 to .29.) The two most important predictors among the socio-psychological values of children were the summed scores on importance of reasons for wanting and for not wanting another child. Respondents who received high summed scores on reasons for wanting another child were likely to have strong motivation to have another child and to want to have more additional children than other respondents. But those who received high summed scores on reasons for not wanting another child tended to have weak motivation to have another child and wanted to have fewer additional children. Unfortunately, these two socio-psychological values of children were run against the number of additional children wanted only. Thus their influence on the other two measures of family size are not shown here. If scores on reasons for wanting and not wanting another child were included in the set of socio-psychological predictors for the dependent variables, parity and total number of children wanted, then these two variables would have shown considerable increase in their variance (R^2).

The variable of continuity, tradition, and security was positively related to parity, indicating that respondents having higher expectations of continuity, tradition, and security from children had more children than others. It was not related to the number of additional children wanted in the expected direction, however. Another socio-psychological value of children that had rather substantial influence on some fertility-related measures was role motivations. Respondents who perceived children as a status or moral symbol tended to have or want few children, a finding contrary to our expectations. Other socio-psychological values of children did not play impressive roles in determining any of family-size measures.

In summary, the VOC measures, both the economic and the socio-psychological values of children, add substantial explanatory power to the prediction of family size and family planning, even after the tradi-

tional socio-demographic variables have been taken into account. Perceived economic values of children appear to be more predictive of family-size and family planning attitudes and practice than the psychological and social values. The psychological and social values of children are capable of being an important net influence in the prediction of fertility motivation, however.

Some additional cautions should be mentioned in conclusion. First, the relationship between some pairs of variables is not in the expected direction or not so strong as expected. It is possible that the lack of strong relationships and the presence of unexpected relationships of those variables were a function of measurement problems. This is one reason why we generally selected several indicators for each variable. The validity of the VOC attitude scales, for instance, is lower than we had expected. The results from these scales are generally weak and often inconsistent. The main reason is that less educated and rural respondents had never thought about children in such a way before. Some of the attitudes expressed by the items were unfamiliar to them, and even in the case of statements that were easier for them to comprehend they had difficulty using the six-point scale to delineate their opinions. Finally, the sample used in this study is not intended to be representative of the population of Thailand, or even of Bangkok, and it is possible that the findings would be somewhat different if another sample had been used. The regression results should therefore be interpreted with caution. Although the findings reported here are tentative rather than definitive, they suggest that future research conducted in this area on a national scale would produce results having implications for population policies and programs.

7

summary of findings and recommendations

In this exploratory phase of the Value of Children Study, an attempt was made to understand in operational terms the ways in which children are valued by parents. Thus describing the dimensions of the value of children has been the main focus of the present investigation. But data in related domains were also collected, since such data would shed light on the manner in which values of children are associated or not associated with other aspects of individual and societal behavior.

Because of the nature of the sample used in Thailand, the findings to be summarized in this section can be generalized only to a limited extent. The specific possibilities and limitations for generalization are discussed later where they apply to particular findings. The sample was made up of 180 couples from three socioeconomic groups: 60 couples from the urban middle class, 60 from the urban lower class, and another 60 from a rural area in the vicinity of Bangkok. The husbands were between the ages of 20 and 44, the wives between 20 and 34; all couples had at least one child. The three subsamples were selected to reflect the three major socioeconomic strata of the population, although not in proportion to their numbers in the population at large—the population of Thailand still being predominantly rural. Despite the nonrepresentative nature of the sample, some tentative recommendations pertaining to population policy may be made at this stage.

The characteristics of the three subgroups differed in ways consistent with the sampling design. Substantial differentiation was noted in several dimensions: years of schooling, type of occupations, family in-

come, duration of marriage, present number of children, and desired eventual number of children. Dimensions showing less differentiation among the three groups include respondent's age and religion. These differences correspond to the usual socioeconomic measures of class difference, confirming that the three subgroups were indeed reasonably representative of the urban middle class, the urban lower class, and the rural class. It should be noted, however, that respondents in the last subgroup were considerably richer and more literate than most rural Thais.

Major findings

The questionnaire approached the central question of how parents value children by several methods. Both open-ended and structured questions were used. Topics known to be of importance, such as values associated with boys and economic values of children, were addressed specifically. We will summarize here the main findings for different topics and different types of questions.

Advantages of having children

Questions about the advantages of having children, compared with not having children, elicited the following responses most often: (1) companionship and avoidance of loneliness; (2) economic and general help, especially in old age; (3) continuity of the family name (including continuity of bloodline). The middle class mentioned companionship most often, whereas the rural group mentioned it least often; the rural group mentioned economic help most often, the urban middle class least often. Continuity of family name was also mentioned most often by the rural group. Additional questions further explored respondents' perceptions of the economic advantages of children—for example, whether respondents expected help from children in their old age. All three subgroups expressed an expectation of economic benefit, the frequency of such responses increasing across subgroups from the middle class to the rural group. Other advantages of having children cited by respondents included the incentives they create for parents to work hard, their being a source of improvement in the lives of their parents and relatives, the maturing experience of childrearing, and the satisfaction of religious and social norms.

Disadvantages of having children

Another question sought out the disadvantages of having children, compared with not having children. The most frequently mentioned

disadvantage was the general financial cost; rearing difficulties and physical work were also salient, mentioned more by wives than by husbands. Other disadvantages were the emotional strain of childrearing, concern over children's health, restrictions on the parents' freedom, problems of discipline, and the responsibility of parenthood. More information on perceived costs of children was gathered from additional questions focused on this topic. For example, the majority of respondents said that raising several children is a heavy financial burden and that a couple should think whether they can afford more children before having them. All these measures of the financial cost indicate that it was a lesser concern for the urban middle class than for the other two socioeconomic groups. Respondents' estimates of their actual expenditures on children showed that urban middle-class parents spent least, and rural parents most, relative to the family income.

Various structured questions concerning the disadvantages of children were also posed. As with the advantages, there was general agreement among Thai respondents about certain disadvantages. Profiles emerged for the three socioeconomic subgroups, again showing the preponderance of the economic problem, especially for the rural group. It is noteworthy that the rural group displayed the highest profile of motivations regarding children, expressing both the strongest positive and the strongest negative motivations.

Reasons for wanting daughters and sons

Respondents were asked why they would want to have at least one girl and at least one boy. The urban middle-class group emphasized the positive behavior and personal qualities of girls, whereas the other two groups emphasized the usefulness of daughters in performing practical chores and housework. More respondents thought it was important to have at least one boy than to have at least one girl. Other questions confirmed the preference for boys. For example, ideal families described by the respondents contained more boys than girls, on the average. The main reason for wanting at least one boy, in all three subgroups, was to continue the family line. This response was given most often by the urban middle class, in contrast to the earlier result on the advantages of children in general. The importance of having a boy was stressed in response to a hypothetical question: If you had no sons, would you continue having babies until you had a boy, or would you stop after a certain number of girls? One-quarter of all respondents said they would continue until a boy was born.

Reasons for wanting and not wanting another child

The survey elicited information by means of structured questions on why parents would want or not want another child. The reasons given by the Thai sample corresponded fairly well with the advantages and disadvantages of having children that they mentioned in response to the open-ended questions, with some noteworthy additions. As reasons for wanting another child, respondents frequently included the desire for children of a particular sex and companionship for existing children. As reasons for not having another child, they mentioned additionally the restriction of freedom another child would impose, the work and bother, and not being able to give sufficient attention and care to existing children.

Another question concerned the total number of children that respondents wished to have. They were asked to give reasons why they would not want fewer children, or more children, than the desired number. The results agreed in general with those discussed above, but emphasized economic aspects. Respondents wanted to attain their desired family size because of the economic benefits and security it would bring, but they did not want to exceed it because of the costs of rearing and educating additional children.

Attitudes toward having children

A set of 45 Likert-type statements regarding parenthood provided a means of weighting various values associated with children. Respondents were asked to state how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement, there being six choices (from strongly agree to strongly disagree). Items with which there was strong agreement among all or most of the subgroups were: having children gives a person a special incentive to succeed in life; having children makes a stronger bond between husband and wife; a girl becomes a woman only after she is a mother; one of the best things about having children is the true loyalty they show to their parents; one of the best things about being a parent is the chance to teach children what they should and should not do; a man has a duty to have children to continue the family name; one of the best things about having children is that you are never lonely; the really important things in life can be learned only from the experience of raising children. The items eliciting lowest scores from all or most subgroups were: caring for children is a tedious and boring job; always having children around is a great mental strain; considering the pressures from family and friends, a person really doesn't have much choice about whether or not to have children; chil-

dren limit you in what you want to do and where you want to go; a young couple is not fully accepted in the community until they have children; having children causes many disagreements and problems between husband and wife; a person with children is looked up to in the community more than a person without children; before having a child a couple should consider whether they would rather use their money for something else; before having a child a couple should consider whether it would interfere with the wife's work or not.

Responses to the 45 items were factor analyzed. Orthogonal factor analysis was used, and five meaningful factors were isolated. On the basis of their constituent items they were given the following names: (1) external influences on childbearing; (2) financial costs and practical burden; (3) achievement of maturity; (4) personal and societal benefits; and (5) power and influence to self and family. These factors constitute a new manner of organizing people's values concerning children into a limited number of dimensions and thus provide an aid to future discussion and data collection. Most of the differences among subgroups on the attitude items are consistent with those found using other measures. Differences between socioeconomic groups are greater than those between male and female respondents.

The 45 attitude items were also grouped into clusters of logically related items. In contrast to the six clusters derived from factor analysis, these clusters, or subscales, were derived from aggregated VOC data from all six countries participating in the study. The subscales were as follows: (1) continuity, tradition, security; (2) parenthood satisfactions; (3) role motivations; (4) happiness and affection; (5) goals, incentives from children; (6) social status from children; (7) external controls on childbearing; (8) costs of children; and (9) decision-mindedness in childbearing.

Perceptions of economic costs and benefits of children

Throughout the analysis, the financial cost and burden of children was found to be a major negative value. A large number of Thai respondents (62 percent) considered the financial burden of children to be a very important reason for not wanting another child. This burden was felt most by the urban lower class, somewhat less by the rural group, and least by the urban middle class. Male and female respondents did not differ on this matter. Most of the costs were associated with raising and educating children.

The number of children that would be a "heavy financial burden" to raise was 3.8, on the average, with the rural group citing a slightly

higher average number than the other two groups. Three-quarters of all respondents said they would be worse off with more children; the proportion giving this response was highest among the urban middle-class group (85 percent). Finally, one-third of the respondents said the number of children they wanted would increase if either their income were doubled or the government provided free education for their children.

All these findings indicate that the financial burden of raising children was a major concern of the Thai respondents. Perhaps this is the main reason why the average number of children wanted (3.3) and the ideal number of children (3.1) were so much lower than the number of children in the respondents' families of orientation (6.0, on the average). If we assume that respondents' family-size goals will be realized, it is still doubtful that, in just one generation, average family size could decline from 6.0 into 3.3 unless economic constraints were responsible.

The data also indicate rather strong expectations of economic help from children in one form or another. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents did expect to receive economic and practical help from their sons and daughters. As expected, the urban middle class expected the least help from their children and the urban lower-class and rural groups both emphasized this kind of help; but rural respondents were more concerned with economic help proper, whereas urban lower-class respondents were more concerned with practical help in the home.

In general, the types of economic or financial help the respondents expected from their children include economic and unspecified help, especially in old age; help in housework; sharing of financial responsibility; help in the family business; and help in raising other children. It should be noted that expectations of help from children may not necessarily be a preconceived incentive for having children. They could also be a form of compensation expected in return for what the parents have done for their children. The correlation found between present family size and expected economic benefits was significant.

Family size and family planning

The VOC survey also investigated attitudes toward family size and family planning, as a complement to the data on values of children. Both number of living children and number of children wanted increase across subgroups from the urban middle class to the rural group. On the other hand, positive birth control attitude, positive abortion

attitude, social pressure to have a small family (small-family press), and communication with spouse on family size are all positively related to socioeconomic status. The urban middle-class respondents displayed a more favorable attitude toward birth control and abortion, more small-family press, and more communication with spouse regarding family size than the rural and the lower-class respondents. Understanding of contraceptive methods similarly decreases across the three subgroups, as does use of contraception. The methods reported most often as ever being used were the pill, the rhythm method, the condom, and the IUD, in that order. The methods presently most used, however, were the pill, the IUD, female sterilization, and male sterilization, respectively.

The above family-size and family planning variables were analyzed for correlation with background variables (e.g., education, income, age at marriage). The correlations of both desired family size and ideal family size with the background variables were significant only in a few cases, implying that the two family-size variables cannot be substantially predicted by background variables. Family planning variables had stronger correlations. Their high positive correlations were with the group of background variables that generally indicates modernization or a "developed" lifestyle: education, modern goods owned, urban experience, family income, and age at marriage. Their low correlations were with wife's employment duration.

The same set of family-size and family planning variables was also analyzed for correlation with respondents' socio-psychological orientations. Correlational analyses indicated that the following socio-psychological variables were significantly associated with either family size or family planning: overall modernity, fatalism, small-family press, mass media exposure, educational aspiration for son(s), and educational aspiration for daughter(s).

Thus family-size and family planning variables appear to be substantially influenced by socioeconomic background and socio-psychological factors in the present research.

Correlations of VOC dimensions with background and fertility measures

Two sets of value-of-children variables were analyzed for correlation with selected background variables and fertility variables. The first set consisted of the nine subscales derived from aggregated data from the VOC attitude items. The second set comprised 26 reasons for wanting and not wanting another child. The background variables used

were education, urban experience, and overall modernity. The fertility variables used were general birth control attitude and total number of children wanted. We found that most of the value-of-children dimensions were fairly well correlated with the background factors, but rather weakly correlated with the fertility variables. In particular, respondents with high education, much urban experience, or a high modernity score showed less concern than others about such traditional values of children as continuity or security, social status, role motivations, and parenthood satisfactions. These respondents also tended to want a small family and to approve of the use of contraception to achieve their family-size goals.

Determinants of family planning and family size

A multivariate analysis technique was employed to ascertain the role of the socio-demographic and value-of-children variables in explaining fertility. The fertility-related variables, which were the dependent variables in the equation, were made up of number of living children (parity), number of additional children wanted, total number of children wanted, number of contraceptive methods known, general birth control attitude, and current use of birth control. For each of the dependent variables, step-wise regression analyses were run successively with four sets of independent variables: parity, the socio-demographic variables, the economic value of children, and the socio-psychological value of children.

The results showed that overall the socio-demographic variables by themselves explain a fairly high percentage of the variance in the selected fertility-related variables. The level of prediction was moderately improved when the values of children were added to the equation. In other words, the ways in which respondents valued children did have an effect on their fertility and family planning attitudes and behavior in addition to the influence that their background characteristics had on fertility.

The VOC measures, both the economic and the socio-psychological values, add substantial explanatory power to the prediction of family size and family planning, even after the traditional socio-demographic variables have been taken into account. The perceived economic values of children appear to be more predictive of family size and family planning attitude and practice than the psychological and social values. Nevertheless, the psychological and social values of children are capable of being an important net influence in the prediction of fertility motivation—e.g., the number of additional children wanted.

Recommendations for population policies

At this exploratory stage of research on the satisfactions and costs of children, priority is given to the development and validation of measuring instruments. The information gained, however, may be of interest to those concerned with population policies and population education or communication programs. The following recommendations are based on the findings presented in this volume, which are of course subject to the limitations already mentioned.

1. It is clear that the values of children are complex. There is no single substitute for a child. In addition, stronger motivations for having children do not always imply a larger number of children wanted. One or two children may be enough to satisfy parents who have strong and complex motivations for having children. Nevertheless, knowledge of the values of children that are significantly related to family planning and family size will be useful for formulating policies aimed at reducing fertility.

Among the positive values, security for the parents in old age and continuity of the family name appear to be significantly related to the number of children a couple already has. To encourage lower fertility, substitutes for these functions of children are needed. At present continuity of family name and wealth is expected of sons in Thai society. Legislation to insure equal rights and opportunities to women might lead to reduced fertility rates by providing women with more viable alternatives to raising children than are now available to them and also by reducing the perceived importance of having male children.

2. Parents' expectation of receiving security and care in old age from children, which was related to their desire for large families, might be weakened if public measures, such as old-age insurance and pensions, provided adequate support to people in old age. The availability of government insurance or pension schemes would reduce the need for parents to depend on their children for support in their later years and thereby reduce the economic incentive for having children. Other measures that provide economic security—for example, unemployment benefits and health insurance—should also be strengthened.

3. Child labor has economic value in Thailand. Children and youths may contribute to their parents' income by working on the family farm, producing handmade goods, or taking a job outside the home. That is why a negative association was found between economic help expected from children and both birth control attitude and current use of birth control. Laws prohibiting child labor would lessen this value of children. Once parents lose the benefits of their children's

earnings, and their costs increase because the children no longer pay their own way, they are likely to think twice before having the next child. Enforcing compulsory education laws and increasing educational opportunities should also reduce the economic benefits of children since the children cannot work while they are in school.

4. The companionship value of children, both to siblings and to the parents, was predominant among the VOC respondents. Combined with the individualistic nature of the Thai family, this value results in the need for a large number of children. To reduce the need for many children, a more collective approach to social activities should be fostered by public policy. In collective activities friends or cousins can be a substitute for siblings. Such activities include community help programs, intervillage group visits, cooperatives, and children's associations like Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

5. Children were seen as fostering maturity, social status in the community, and a better standard of living for their parents. These values are all compatible with a small family size. In fact, there is much evidence that limiting their family size helps parents to improve their living standards by putting fewer strains on their resources. Because couples who are better off financially and more modernized tend to have smaller families than others, and because they usually are trendsetters, a small nuclear family is likely in time to be accorded higher social status than a large extended one. Educational efforts might be directed to changing family-size norms by emphasizing the economic and emotional advantages of a small family. Other means of achieving maturity, social status, and improved living standards should also be encouraged, such as higher education and career development.

6. The couples studied had favorable attitudes toward family planning but the number of family planning practitioners at the time of the interviews was nevertheless low. A full range of acceptable, easily used, and effective means of preventing births ought to be made available by government and private agencies to all persons of reproductive age—preferably at nominal or no cost. Programs will be more effective if they are tailored to the needs and living situations of the target groups.

7. Finally, in order to make family planning part of a broad educational program for the Thais, strengthening of existing information, education, and communication programs is recommended. These programs should aim at (1) using both extensive and intensive person-to-person motivational efforts to increase the target population's awareness and use of existing family planning services; (2) continuing the

national program of information and education among specific target groups on the values and ethics of planned parenthood, population issues, methods of family planning, and available clinic services; and (3) creating a demand among the target groups for additional family planning services. It should also be mentioned that the potential usefulness of value-of-children research is high for communication campaigns. Such research reveals the motivations for children of various target groups, so that messages can be designed especially for them.

appendix and appendix table

Appendix Country-specific questions in Thailand Value of Children questionnaire

Desired family size

8.1 I would like to ask about a personal matter, that is whether the present pregnancy was intended by you or your (wife/husband) or whether it was an accident.

1 ☐ Intended by respondent
2 ☐ Intended by respondent's spouse
3 ☐ Intended by both
4 ☐ Not intended
5 ☐ Other _____

Religion and religiosity

129.1 What is your religion?

1 ☐ Buddhism
2 ☐ Christianity
3 ☐ Islam
4 ☐ Other (Specify) _____
5 ☐ More than one religion. They are: _____
_____
6 ☐ No religion

129.2 How often do you go to the (temple, church, mosque)?

1 ☐ Every religious day (i.e., Monday; Sunday; Friday)
2 ☐ Often
3 ☐ Sometimes
4 ☐ Do not go
5 ☐ No answer

129.3 On important days of your religion, do you perform the religious ceremonies?

1 ☐ Perform such ceremonies on every important day
2 ☐ Perform them on almost every important day
3 ☐ Perform them on some important days
4 ☐ Never perform them
5 ☐ No answer

129.4 Do you think that most people in this community are more religious or less religious than you are?

1 ☐ Most people are more religious

2 ☐ Most people are less religious
3 ☐ Most people are about equally religious as respondent
4 ☐ Don't know

129.5 Do you agree with those who say that we should try to make merit or give away as many things as possible for the sake of religion?
(Read first four answers only.)
1 ☐ Strongly agree
2 ☐ Agree
3 ☐ Disagree
4 ☐ Strongly disagree
5 ☐ No opinion

129.6 Do you believe that there really is a next life (Buddhism), Kyama day (Islam), heaven and hell (Christianity)?
1 ☐ Strongly believe
2 ☐ Do not believe
3 ☐ Not certain

129.7 Do you believe in the power of superstitions?
1 ☐ Believe
2 ☐ Do not believe
3 ☐ Not certain

129.8 Do you think that (respondent's religion) is very important for your life, moderately important, not so important, or not at all important?
1 ☐ Very important
2 ☐ Moderately important
3 ☐ Not so important
4 ☐ Not at all important

Family economic status

161. (Modern goods owned by respondent)

1 ☐ Clock or watch	9 ☐ Electric iron
2 ☐ Bicycle	10 ☐ Radio
3 ☐ Electric fan	11 ☐ Car
4 ☐ Motorcycle	12 ☐ Television set
5 ☐ Refrigerator	13 ☐ Sewing machine
6 ☐ Record player	14 ☐ Clothes washer
7 ☐ Electric cooking pot	15 ☐ Camera
8 ☐ Air-conditioner	16 ☐ Telephone

162.1 (If respondent is tenant): What rent do you pay for the house you live in? _____ baht.

162.2 What is the price of this house not including land? _____ baht.

Rural socioeconomic status

163. (Modern goods owned—asked of rural husbands only)

1 ☐ Clock or watch	8 ☐ Camera
2 ☐ Bicycle	9 ☐ Ploughing tractor
3 ☐ Motorcycle	10 ☐ Water pump
4 ☐ Radio	11 ☐ Air-pressured lamp
5 ☐ Car	12 ☐ Thermos pot
6 ☐ Sewing machine	13 ☐ Household privy
7 ☐ Motorboat	

163.1 What kind of house do you live in?

1 Wooden or cement _____
2 Single floor or two floors _____
3 Roofed with tin or *krabuang* _____
4 Its price not including land _____ baht

Appendix Table Factor structure of 45 attitude items after varimax rotation

Item	Factor I	II	III	IV	V	VI	Mean
27 A person with children is looked up to in the community more than a person without children	**.59**	.11	.31	.10	.22	−.01	5.0
38 It isn't right for a couple to interfere with nature by deciding to limit the number of children they will have	**.57**	.13	−.02	.03	.11	−.02	3.8
11 Considering the pressures from family and friends, a person really doesn't have much choice about whether or not to have children	**.56**	.29	.07	.12	−.08	.19	3.1
21 A young couple is not fully accepted in the community until they have children	**.54**	.20	.17	.11	−.03	.30	4.1
5 Most married couples would be happier if they did not have any children	**−.47**	−.18	.20	−.01	.20	−.12	5.9
7 It is important to have children so that the family traditions will live on	**.41**	.00	−.01	**.42**	.31	.25	5.9
9 A couple ought to think seriously about the inconveniences caused by children before they have any	−.05	**.63**	−.02	.05	.09	.06	5.4
19 Children limit you in what you want to do and where you want to go	−.01	**.62**	.15	−.10	.01	.10	5.0
41 Before having a child, a couple should consider whether it would interfere with the wife's work or not	.08	**.62**	−.05	.09	.08	.12	4.7
10 Always having children around is a great mental strain	.26	**.61**	.06	.18	−.09	.03	4.3
26 Having children causes many disagreements and problems between husband and wife	−.24	**−.60**	−.12	.06	.07	−.04	4.2

37	Raising children is a heavy financial burden for most people	−.21	**.57**	.21	−.12	.15	.15	6.3
1	Caring for children is a tedious and boring job	.13	**.53**	−.07	.11	−.16	.17	3.9
32	Before having a child, a couple should consider whether they would rather use their money for something else	.25	**.48**	−.20	.07	.04	.04	3.7
44	A person who has no children can never really be happy	.05	.10	**.65**	−.12	.14	.17	5.9
20	Life for most people would be pretty dull without children	.01	.07	**.55**	−.09	.01	.07	5.8
29	Just the feeling a parent gets of being needed is enough to make having children worthwhile	−.02	.03	**.55**	**.43**	.17	−.07	6.0
28	It is only natural that a woman should want children	−.01	.02	**.52**	.33	.10	−.06	6.1
43	The family with children is the only place in the modern world where a person can feel comfortable and happy	.30	−.02	**.52**	.03	.36	−.03	6.0
45	A boy becomes a man only after he is a father	.22	.02	**.51**	.34	.00	.10	6.1
30	A person who has been a good parent can feel completely satisfied with his achievements in life	.04	.09	**.50**	.25	.27	.00	6.2
16	A girl becomes a woman only after she is a mother	−.08	.08	.29	**.64**	.16	−.07	6.5
3	Raising children is an act of virtue	.21	−.01	.07	**.60**	.06	.21	5.9
4	It is only with a child that a person can feel completely free to express his love and affection	−.03	.03	−.09	**.56**	.13	−.02	6.4
12	It is a person's duty to society to have children	.35	.09	.10	**.51**	.04	.22	5.2
2	A good reason for having children is that they can help when parents are too old to work	.31	.13	.03	**.48**	.07	.28	6.1
29	Just the feeling a parent gets of being needed is enough to make having children worthwhile	−.02	.03	.55	**.43**	.17	−.07	6.0

Appendix Table *(continued)*

Item	Factor I	II	III	IV	V	VI	Mean
7 It is important to have children so that the family traditions will live on	.40	.00	−.01	**.42**	.31	.25	5.9
33 One of the best things about being a parent is the chance to teach children what they should and should not do	.14	−.01	.14	.02	**.65**	.10	6.3
6 Having children gives a person a special incentive to succeed in life	−.04	.02	.01	−.01	**.62**	.05	6.5
14 Having children makes a stronger bond between husband and wife	−.01	.08	.07	.12	**.61**	−.04	6.6
35 A person can feel that part of him lives on after death if he has children	.14	−.06	.12	.17	**.55**	.15	6.6
15 One of the highest purposes of life is to have children	.07	.10	.08	.14	**.53**	−.08	6.3
36 One of the best things about having children is that you are never lonely	−.20	−.02	.22	.18	**.40**	−.01	6.5
24 For most people, it is inevitable to have children	.10	.13	.14	.13	−.02	**.75**	5.6
23 The first thing a couple should think about when deciding to have children is whether or not they can afford it	.13	.19	−.01	.01	−.03	**.75**	5.6
22 After becoming a parent, a person is less likely to behave immorally	.05	.16	.00	.10	.10	**.74**	5.4
8 It is only natural that a man should want children	.23	−.08	.25	.30	.16	.13	5.9
13 All the efforts a parent makes for his children are worthwhile in the long run	.34	.01	.13	.20	.30	.00	5.9
17 It is the parents' fault if their children are not successful in life	.22	.38	.16	−.04	.06	.04	5.3

18	Having children is the most important function of marriage	.20	−.03	.16	.32	.22	.14	5.9
25	One of the best things about having children is the true loyalty they show to their parents	−.21	−.01	.36	.31	.35	.01	6.7
31	The family with children is the basis for all that is good in our society	.25	.02	.36	.15	.32	−.03	6.0
34	A man has a duty to have children to continue the family name	.20	−.04	.27	.11	.35	.38	6.6
39	When you have children, you have to give up a lot of other things that you enjoy	−.27	.32	.33	.03	.25	.02	6.1
40	The really important things in life can be learned only from the experience of raising children	−.00	−.00	.14	.28	.29	−.01	6.6
42	Having children is a sign of blessing on a marriage	.46	−.06	.41	.06	.11	.24	5.4

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